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Ideas on Liberty

NOVEMBER 1972

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YOU!

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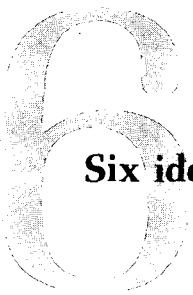
EDMUND A. OPITZ



Six ideas to make us human

MOST PEOPLE live lives of quiet desperation, Henry David Thoreau told us. If there was truth in that observation, in the pleasant, spacious old New England of Thoreau's day, how much more truth is packed into those words in these melancholy days! Events have gotten out of hand and the world lurches into chaos.

Things have fallen apart faster than any of us would have dared predict, and we are seized by pangs of guilt and self-doubt. So many promising experiments have gone sour, from the New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson to the latest ukase of the present administration. The statesmen of this era talked peace and sought to outlaw war, but they let the twentieth century break down into the bloodiest period of all the twenty-five hundred years of warfare studied by Pitirim Sorokin. "We live," wrote this great scholar, "in an age unique for the unrestrained use of brute force in international relations."

The threat of protracted international conflict is bad enough, but there is also the well-founded fear of domestic violence and crime. And even if we are lucky enough to escape actual robbery, we know that inflation is steadily draining our wealth. We've seen the race issue go from integration to Black Nationalism; we've witnessed the emergence of the sex and drug cult, the rise of astrology, witchcraft and voodooism; V.D. has reached epidemic proportions among the young; and then there is abortion, homosexuality, the campus crisis, the environmental

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crisis, the inner crisis in man himself. For is it not true, as Yeats says in a famous poem, that "The wicked act with dreadful intensity, while the good lack all conviction."

Youth Seeking Identity

It is a time of troubles for all, but perhaps it's easier for the old whose habit patterns firmed up in a healthier era than for the young who are searching for a value system and cannot find one. Depression, in the vocabulary of many young people, does not mean the economic malaise which this country staggered through during the Nineteen Thirties; it means the somber mood in which they hang question marks around life, wondering if it really is worth living. They are trying to find meaning for their lives in terms of the values their elders lived by – or on any other terms – and they are not having much luck. We sometimes find their behavior rather bizarre; the long hair, the weird clothing, the haphazard life styles. But perhaps these symbolize a message they are trying to get across to us. Some of the so-called hippies, by deliberately being ill-housed, ill-clothed and ill-fed, may be practicing a charade whose message is that the More Abundant Life, as defined in New Deal terms, is not a proper goal for man. Perhaps they have a suspicion that reality is wider and deeper than the physical universe revealed to common sense – as religion has always maintained – and so they experiment with mind-expanding drugs. They grope after some form of religious expression, but still they drift.

Now, we know something about the rise and fall of civilizations. In our schoolbooks we read about "The glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome." Toynbee, Spengler and Dawson have made us aware of dead civilizations on other continents. A civilization comes into existence cradled in dominant ideas, launched by deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice, and it maintains itself in a tonic condition only so long as it has solid grounds for believing in itself and its destiny. But civilizations wane; Rome fell; Spengler predicted the decline of the West. We need not buy a single one of Spengler's theories, but it is hard to argue against his phrase: The West is in decline. Great numbers of people in this favored land no longer believe in the things that made Western civilization unique.

An animal species which has flourished in a given area may be wiped out by a disease, or it may be decimated by a predator, or a climatic change may destroy its food supply. Every one of these

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afflictions has beset primitive peoples in times past, but a civilization does not founder for any of these reasons. A civilization goes under when its people, for one reason or another, lose contact with the big keynote ideas of their culture.

Ideas Make Us Human

Wherein lies the great difference between the human species and every other? We have much in common with other forms of life, especially with the warm-blooded vertebrates. In structure we bear some resemblance to the manlike apes, but the critical difference in the domain of ideas far outweighs any resemblances. If a chimpanzee has any thoughts at all about what it means to be an ape, they are rudimentary; he's a pretty good animal without even thinking about it. But no man is fully human unless he maintains a lively contact with a set of ideas as to what it means to be a person.

This is where our disease has set in, in the realm of ideas. The perilous days we are living through are not the result of a drying up of the food supply, which is more abundant than ever. There's been no marked change in the physique of modern man, and disease is not a menace. Nor are we beset by predators. The malaise from which we suffer has impaired the ideas which instruct us what it means to be men and women, and we function poorly in consequence. The people of our race built the Parthenon, constructed the great systems of philosophy, painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, wrote the plays of Shakespeare and the music of Bach; and we can't figure out how to teach our kids tolerance and mutual respect without busing them all over town! Something is definitely wrong with us, and it won't be right with us until we come to terms with six big ideas. I'll mention them briefly now and deal with them at greater length later on. They are the right convictions about free will, reason, self-responsibility, beauty, goodness, and the sacred. We have "blown it" at every one of these points, and that's more than enough to account for the sorry spectacle modern man has made of himself. It also points the way to recovery. Let's, first of all, hear a portion of the indictment leveled at us by contemporaries.

Downgrading Man

The human race is getting a bad press these days, and we love it. Norman Cousins told us a while back that "Modern Man is Obsolete," and we confer a couple of distinguished editorships on him in a frenzy of approval. Robert

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Ardrey writes a book to demolish what he calls The Romantic Fallacy and argues that our forebears were killer apes, whose blood lust still surges in our veins. And so great is the demand for preachments of this sort that the book has gone through seventeen printings! The creature we used to refer to as the glory of creation is, when you scratch the surface, little more than a *Naked Ape*, Desmond Morris tells us. This book has gone through six printings and there are two paperback editions. Knowing a good thing when he sees it, Morris writes a second book, *The Human Zoo*. The Nobel Laureate in biology, Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, goes Morris one better with a book entitled *The Crazy Ape*. And it is common knowledge that this odious race fouls its own nest, pollutes the environment of its neighbors, wars ceaselessly on its own kind, destroys wildlife, watches Lawrence Welk and votes Republican. The creature once regarded as little lower than the angels is now ranked several degrees below the beasts!

The books whose titles I have listed above purport to be in the realm of science. In the realm of the admittedly fictitious there is a new school of novelists who aim, in their stories, to reveal man as the pitiable slob he really is. A critic comments that "From Cervantes to Hemingway, storytellers have assumed that man has hopes and aspirations, and that they could be expressed meaningfully. Bosh, says the new school. Man is a blob, creeping and leaping about in a world he cannot control, his words meaningless or hypocritical or both."[1]

Immortality of the Soul

How different the outlook of a great writer like William Faulkner, in these words from his speech accepting the Nobel Prize in 1950: "I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."

Brave words such as these are in danger today of being drowned out by the sheer bulk of the other message, which, through the numerous outlets it has contrived, produces the enervating atmosphere of misanthropy in which we struggle for survival. Take the movies. We are given films which degrade our species by focusing on the sordid, the silly, the ugly, the cowardly, the disgusting; as if all elements of the dramatic were

[1] *Time*, October 13, 1958.

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lacking in characters who exhibit nobility, heroism, kindness, or even common decency. Another tack is taken in such a film as "The Hellstrom Chronicle." The mere ability to film those astonishing pictures of the insect world represents the culmination of the work of many geniuses, but this heartening thought is squelched by the narrator who tells us toward the end of the film that they really do organize things better in the insect world, and human beings should learn from wasps and ants to submerge their individual talents for the greater glory of the hive and termitary!

The examples I have cited from works of popular science and the realm of entertainment might be multiplied many times, and they represent no more than the fraction of the iceberg that pokes itself above the surface of the water. The huge mass below the water line represents the mood, outlook, trend or drift that sways the multitude.

In many previous ages lonely thinkers and poets sounded the note of pessimism, voiced their despair, and vented their hatred of life. But they were read and heard by only a handful of their contemporaries; they did not reach the multitudes. The masses of men in previous ages were comfortably insulated against ideas of any sort; most of them couldn't read and the range of the human voice limited the size of the audience. The traditional religious belief gave men's lives meaning and even dignity, and most human energy was used up in producing enough to live on.

Catering to the Masses

Things are different now. Anti-human sentiments, dislike of humanity, hatred of life, are epidemic among present-day intellectuals, and the idea that life may not be worth living has percolated down to the masses of people. This is a new situation in history. The masses of men are relatively inarticulate but only a mass audience can make a book a best seller, or award a golden record to some singer, or enable a film to gross ten million dollars. The people, books, songs, ideas which ride the crest of fashion today are held there by popular support; whereas, formerly, the artist and composer wrote for wealthy patrons. Joseph Hayden composed magnificent music for the Esterhazys; but Leonard Bernstein writes his *Mass* for the masses. We are dealing with a perverse attitude toward life which has infected major sectors of Western culture at every level.

In the year 1929, Joseph Wood Krutch wrote a stunning little

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book entitled *The Modern Temper*, using the word "temper" in the sense of frame of mind, or outlook. His major point was that educated people had come to assume that science had exposed as delusions the values and standards upon which Western Civilization had been founded, and that the decline of the West was due to Western man's loss of faith in himself. The prevalent belief, he argued, is that men are animals and animals are machines.

What men believe about themselves is an important factor in the success or failure of their efforts. A golfer who firmly believes he can sink a putt is more likely to do so than one who believes he'll miss the cup. A swimmer like Don Schollander tells how he gets himself "psyched up" before a race and tries to make his opponents feel like losers in a war of nerves. It is a notorious fact in baseball that certain pitchers have the "Indian sign" on a particular batter; he's a dangerous hitter except against this one pitcher. The right beliefs, in short, inspire right action.

I don't know what an elephant believes about himself; I suspect that he doesn't believe anything about himself, one way or the other. I think it would not matter; he'd go on being the same old elephant he always was. Sometimes we say of a pet Saint Bernard who tries to crawl up into our lap that "Bozo thinks he's a kitten." But we know we're joking; and even if this was said seriously, we know that Bozo remains a dog no matter what he thinks he is.

With the human species it is different: Human beings do not attain their full stature as persons unless they are reinforced by the proper ideas and beliefs about the meaning of being a person. We share our physical being with other mammals; biologically speaking, we are anthropoids. By virtue of our genetic equipment we are clever, adaptable hominids; but no one of us realizes his full potential as a man or woman unless he knows what it means to be human. If we so misread human nature as to regard our species as nothing more than the fortuitous product of natural and social forces, then we have impaired our chances of achieving the most uniquely human qualities within our capacity.

Environmentalism

If it is generally believed that man is merely the product of his environment – the individual a passive outcome of the time and place into which he was born, the human race a consequence of accidental chemical and physical

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events of a few million years ago — when such beliefs pervade a culture, the result is pessimism and resignation. The sense of individual responsibility is dead in a man who regards himself as a passive creature of his circumstances. The only people who prove superior to their circumstances, who surmount environmental handicaps, are those whose beliefs about the human species endow men and women with the creative energy to overcome life's difficulties.

It may sound as though I am endorsing a "think and grow rich" formula, or the like. Actually, I am talking about the big picture; the dominant world view entertained by a culture, the prevailing ideology, the real religion. The dominant world view today is some form of materialism; explicit where Marxianism has taken hold, implicit elsewhere. Let me document this assertion from a statement entitled "What I Believe" by C. P. Snow; novelist, scientist, member of the peerage, writing in the current issue of the *Britannica Roundtable* (Vol. 1, No. 3). A publication such as this is no vehicle for publishing radical departures from orthodoxy; Baron Snow's statement is printed because his point of view is commonplace among people who regard themselves as being in step with up-to-date ideas. Snow writes as follows: "I believe life — human life, all life — is a . . . fluke which depended on all manner of improbable conditions happening at the same time." But if all life is a chance occurrence, so is Baron Snow's life. And if Snow's life is a fluke how can his thinking be anything but a series of flukes? His thoughts then are random events, without rational foundation. "All that happened," he continues, "is within the domain of the laws of physics and chemistry . . . it was a completely material process. . . . A few million years ago, subject to the laws of statistical chance, the creatures that were our direct ancestors came into existence. . . . Speech and what we call conscious intelligence accrued. . . . We are still an animal species, but much cleverer than all others." Snow goes on to add, rather wistfully it seems, "It has been a very unlikely process, with many kinds of improbability along the way."

Nature's Passion for Order

Now, old Mother Nature has a passion for order. She has an aversion to disorder, and the Laws of Probability simply record Mother Nature's gyroscopic tug to keep things on course. The Laws of Probability record that the number of male and female children

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born is roughly equal. Flip a penny fifty times and it will come up heads on the average of about every other throw – twenty-five times out of fifty. Make a thousand random throws of a pair of dice and the Laws of Probability can tell you approximately how many times they'll come up snake-eyes, and how many times you'll get box cars. Numbers between two and twelve are within the system, and each of the eleven possible numbers will appear a certain number of times according to the laws of statistical chance.

But let's pose this question: In a thousand random throws of the dice how many times will we get seventeen? How many times will the dice turn into a rabbit? The answer is that this would never happen; spooky questions like this imply belief in magic. Now suppose we ask the same question, but say that the dice have been thrown once a second for a billion years. Now how many seventeens and how many rabbits? The answer of any sensible person is "None!" to both questions. The number seventeen and rabbits are outside the system of the little spotted cubes called dice.

When a man like C. P. Snow declares that nonlife becomes life due to the operation of the Laws of Probability over immense time, he attributes magical properties to mere duration. He assumes that dice do turn into rabbits if the time span be measured in billions of years. And when he invokes another huge block of time to account for the transformation of the nonmental into the mental and the nonrational into the rational, he is endowing the mere sequence of days, centuries, and millenia with miracle-working efficacy.

Monkeys vs. Shakespeare

We've all heard the assertion – intended to illustrate what mere chance and time can accomplish – that if a thousand monkeys were seated at a thousand typewriters and banged away for a thousand years they would reproduce every one of Shakespeare's sonnets. The premise upon which this wild illustration is based is that a Shakespearian sonnet is nothing but a mechanical arrangement of black letters on white paper. There are indeed letters on paper, but there is one other special ingredient in these sonnets: Shakespeare's genius. There is no place for genius in the world view of the materialist who professes to believe that mind is an offshoot of matter. A poet simply marks the location where a poem occurs, according to B. F. Skinner: "The poet is also a locus, a place in which certain genetic and environmental causes come together to have a common

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effect."[2] And besides, the genius is a salient individual who stands out above the crowd when really he should be content to seek "social gains!"

What men believe about themselves has a great deal to do with determining the success or failure of their efforts in the several departments of life, and when influential segments of the literate population embrace notions about the universe which demean man by depriving him of his most distinctive characteristics the culture is thrown off base.

Let me now probe a little deeper along this line. I shall argue that six major ideas, together with body, brain and nervous system, transform what Snow calls "an animal species, but much cleverer than all the others" into a full-fledged member of the human species. A creature with anthropoid features who completely lacks these ideas is not of our species even though he walks, talks, and dresses like a man. Fortunately, in consequence of the animal health and grace in even the worst of men, it is almost impossible for any person to eliminate from his make-up all traces of these ideas; some influence remains to keep us reachable.

Now then, six big, potent, interrelated ideas, without which man is not man.

- 1. *Free Will.* Man's gift of free will makes him a responsible being.
- 2. *Rationality.* Man is a reasoning being who, by taking thought, gains valid truths about himself and the universe.
- 3. *Self-responsibility.* Each person is the custodian of his own energy and talents, charged with the lifetime task of bringing himself to completion.
- 4. *Beauty.* Man confronts beauty in the very nature of things, and reproduces this vision in art.
- 5. *Goodness.* Man has a moral sense, enabling and requiring him to choose between good and evil.
- 6. *The Sacred.* Man participates in an order which transcends nature and society.

Each of these big ideas is in trouble today. The attack on them has been gathering momentum for a couple of centuries and the case against has just about carried the day in influential circles. We'll further examine these ideas in a concluding article next month.

[2] *Saturday Review*, July 15, 1972.

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LEONARD E. READ

YOU RASCAL, YOU!

From whence come wars and fighting among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your number? *James 4:1*

AS WITH ALL of my "original" ideas, this one turns out to be "old hat." Upon reading the first draft, an associate remarked, "Why, that is precisely what the Bible says." That accounts for the opening quotation. There then came to mind an essay by E. W. Dykes entitled "Big Wars from Little Errors Grow." (*The Freeman,* January, 1964.) Old hat or not, the theme needs constant repetition; it is so easily forgotten.

As I view the societal scene from my modest place in it, four current phenomena are outstandingly impressive:

1. Things on the surface, at least, appear to be amiss, not only in the U.S.A. but worldwide: wars with guns, wars with words in religion, education, business, politics, brutishness on the campuses as on the streets. Never in my lifetime have the confrontations been more pronounced.
2. An amazing awakening to the fact that things are amiss: countless admissions by persons on all sides of the politico-economic argument – scholarly intellectuals, columnists, politicians, and others – many of whom have had a hand in bringing on the very calamity they now decry.
3. A frenzied search for explanations, causes, reasons – of the most diverse nature. These range from an incompetent bureaucracy to tax loopholes to inequality of income to excessive or inadequate welfarism to economic growth to lagging GNP – you name it! Never have the assigned rea-

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sons been more at odds and, as I see it, more astray.

4. A widespread acknowledgment of trouble but without any noticeable confession of personal shortcomings. Nearly every finger points at someone else; it is impressively *you;* there is hardly an *I* in the population.

Imagine! All of this rascality and not a professed rascal among us! Why? It is simply because the real evil, the cause of our waywardness, is rarely suspected. Thus, self-identification is impossible. People do not link themselves to error about which they are unaware.

What is this rascality? It is the domineering habit, the insistence that others act in accord with one's own shadowy lights. Perhaps no one has shaken this habit completely, so common is its practice. This habit has its inception in the closest relationships, as in the family, one parent lording it over the other or both of them assuming an authoritarian as distinguished from an exemplary relationship with their children. It takes such seemingly innocent forms as do-as-I-say – a carbon copy way of life.

This tendency, once rooted, spreads by unseen degrees to neighbors, the classroom, the pulpit, and other associations. Sooner or later, it begins to grow teeth and takes the form of do-as-I-say-*or-else,* that is, it explodes into out-and-out coercion as in countless thousands of unprincipled governmental compulsions. When not recognized as evil and thus unchecked, it brings on dictatorships and finally reaches its apogee, its most vicious manifestation: mass slaughter.

I am unaware of any evil more pronounced than man lording it over man. Not even God does this. Indeed, He has given us a freedom so radical that we may deny our Maker or otherwise make fools of ourselves. As I see it, the domineering habit is the root of all evil[1] and unless there is some realization that it is, we will continue to ascribe nonreasons for our troubles and without anyone faulting himself. We will go on exclaiming, "You rascal, you!"

A Record of Failure

Enough of my theorizing. Let us reflect on an observed fact: an

[1] This is close to the idea of Original Sin, as many theologians define it: the tendency of the creature to try to usurp the role of the Creator. That interpretation appears to be in accord with the Biblical account which describes the tempter as telling the human creature that if he will eat the forbidden fruit he can become like God. *Genesis* 3: 5. See also *Nature, Man and God* by William Temple (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 496 ff.

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example cannot be found where domineering in practice – man lording it over man – has resulted in success.[2] The record is failure, without exception. It has to be. A carbon copy is never as good as the imperfect original.

Markedly on the increase are the complaints I hear from fathers and mothers about the waywardness of their children. In some instances, drugs. But most of them go like this: "She is brilliant, a straight A student in college, but she has bought the whole socialistic doctrine. She won't do as I say. How do I solve this problem?" I have yet to hear one of these do-as-I-say parents confess, "The fault is mine." In far too many of these relationships an unsuspected domineering attitude has been substituted for parental cooperation and guidance.

Take two cases of domineering that have "teeth": government education and the government postal service.

Government education has three forms of domineering: compulsory attendance, government dictation of the curricula, and the forcible collection of the wherewithal to pay the bills. That education in America is in a mess goes without saying. It is generally conceded, even by many educators. Show me one person who says, "The fault is mine." *Yet, it is the fault of everyone who has had any part in endorsing or supporting or practicing any form of domineering!*[3]

The government postal service never, even remotely, matched what a free market operation would have accomplished. And it is getting worse day by day. Can you name one person during the past century who confessed the fault is his? No one makes such an admission because he does not recognize the domineering trait as the root of the failure.

The railroads have been subjected to domineering with "teeth" for decades. They are failing. Not a person takes the blame; it is now and always has been, "You rascal, you!" There is no end to the illustrations that could be given.

When Growth Ceases

As already stated, the domineering habit has its inception in the closest relationships. Correct it here and it will cease to be a men-

[2] Success is composed of gains, not losses. Sputniks, moon ventures, the Gateway Arch, and the like—ambitions of a few – are made possible by enormous losses on the part of millions of people. With justice or fairness as the premise, these are failures.

[3] This is not "collective guilt" as some would have it but individual error piled high. And, critics to the contrary, each of us is to some extent shaped by the environment in which we find ourselves. In another kind of world, you and I would be in another kind of endeavor.

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ace elsewhere. Let us return, for illustration, to those parents whose children refuse to share parental views, conform to parental dictates.

True, these parents are unaware that they have been domineering and such recognition is indeed difficult. As parents, we tend to forget the growth we ourselves experienced during childhood and adolescence. By the time we reach parenthood, our own growth may have stopped. We have arrived, that is, we no longer feel that need to learn which we want our children to feel. If they would only do as we say – think as we do – that would be good enough! The insistence that our children do what we ourselves refuse to do is what destroys the proper relationships; there is no longer a learning partnership. Our failure to maintain this kinship in learning is a form of domineering. Looked at from the child's point of view, he is a know-nothing and the parent the know-it-all. Conflict!

Teacher-Student Relations

Perhaps the best way to shed light on the proper relationship between you and me, husband and wife, parent and child – all close relationships – is to cite an actual case between a teacher and one of his students. My introduction began with a letter from the student, a stranger to me. Here it is, abbreviated:

"Sir, I am a freshman at a college in Florida. Seven short months ago I came here believing in Keynesian economics. That is what I had been taught in high school and I had accepted it without question. Since coming here I have been made aware of these fallacies, and due to my teacher, ... It is like I have been blind and suddenly recovered my sight."

A few days later, the teacher, also a stranger to me and unaware of the student's letter, wrote in part:

"I am a Social Science professor at a private, small liberal arts college. I am very much interested in the freedom point of view and, for the last few months, *have spent time trying to understand the view*". (Italics mine)

Fascinated with these two letters, I invited the professor to one of our Seminars. In getting to know him, I discovered what turned the student from socialism to a free market point of view. This professor is trying to understand; he and his students are partners in the learning process. *They have a common goal: enlightenment!* Contrast this with the parent whose goal is to make the child a carbon copy of himself. The parent may not think of this

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as domineering, but he gives that impression to the youngster. In this circumstance, the parent and child are not in partnership but in conflict. This matter of posture applies in all close relationships.

If we wish to put an end to the more horrible consequences of the domineering habit such as state socialism and eventually mass murder, we can do so by nipping it in the bud. This is to say, rid ourselves of the habit where it is born, namely, in our close relationships, whatever they happen to be.

Riddance requires no more than (1) an awareness that the domineering habit – freedom's opposite – is the root of all evil, (2) an ability to recognize domineering in ourselves and to be done with it, (3) an appreciation that learning is just as much a requirement for the parent as the child, for the teacher as the student, for me as you, as much needed at eighty as eight, and (4) a strict observance of the Golden Rule.

Once we recognize that the vicious domineering of dictators is but the political extremity of the domineering habit that lurks in the mill run of us, we should exclaim, "You rascal, you!" only to the image we see in the mirror. Breaking ourselves of a bad habit is the way to destroy its most malicious manifestation. Remove the source – that's all.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Aggression Is Always Wrong

"LIBERALS" suffer a myopia, an inability to see that aggressive force is used to build the welfare state. True, there is considerably less outright violence in tax collections for interventionism than in full-scale war. Big Government relies much more on the threat of *force*, rather than on its actual employment, to promote the payment of taxes. But anyone could easily witness the transformation of potential energy into kinetic energy – the threat into the reality – by trying to spend for himself the portion of his taxes which would go for, say, farm subsidies. Not surprisingly, few citizens have made this interesting experiment.

CRAIG HOWELL

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The Roots of

"ANTICAPITALISM"

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

IN MANY MINDS, "capitalism" has come to be a bad word, nor does "free enterprise" sound much better. I remember seeing posters in Russia in the early nineteen-thirties depicting capitalists as Frankenstein monsters, as men with yellow-green faces, crocodile teeth, dressed in cutaways and adorned by top hats. What is the reason for this widespread hatred for capitalists and capitalism despite the overwhelming evidence that the system has truly "delivered the goods"? In its mature stage it indeed is providing, not just for a select few but for the masses, a standard of living cordially envied by those bound under other politico-economic arrangements. There are historic, psychological and moral reasons for this state of affairs. Once we recognize them, we might come to better understanding the largely irrational resentment and desire to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

In Europe there still survives a considerable *conservative* opposition against capitalism. The leaders of conservative thought and action, more often than not, came from the nobility which believed in an agragian-patriarchal order. They thought workers should be treated by manufacturers as noblemen treated their agricultural employees and household servants, providing them with total security for their old age, care in the case of illness, and so forth. They also disliked the new business leaders who emerged from the middle classes: the *grand bourgeois* was their social competitor, the banker their disagreeable creditor, not their friend. The big cities with their smoking chimneys were viewed as calamities and destroyers of the good old life.

We know that Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* furi-

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ously attacked the aristocratic social movement as a potential threat to their own program. Actually, most of the leading minds of Christian anticapitalist thought (equally opposed to socialism) were aristocrats: Villeneuve-Bargemont, de Mun, Liechtenstein, Vogelsang, Ketteler.

Bias Against Capitalism Not of Worker Origin

Armin Mohler, the brilliant Swiss-German neo-conservative, has recently explained that one of the weakest points of contemporary conservative thought, still wrapped in the threads of its own obsolete agrarian romanticism, is its hostility against modern technology. How right he is! The exception might have been Italy with its tradition of urban nobility and of patricians who, even before the Reformation, engaged in trade and manufacture. Capitalism, indeed, is of North-Italian origin. It was a Franciscan, Fra Luigi di Pacioli, who invented double-entry bookkeeping. Calvinism gave a new impetus to capitalism but did not invent it. (Aristocratic entrepreneurs in Italy? Count Marzotto with his highly diversified business empire of textile plants, paper mills, hotel chains and fisheries is a typical example. His labor relations are of a patriarchal nature involving substantial fringe benefits which also characterize Japanese business practice.)

The real animosity against free enterprise did *not* originate with the laborers. Bear in mind that in the early nineteenth century the working class was miserably paid, and this for two reasons: (1) the income from manufacturing was quite limited (true mass production came later) and (2) the lion's share of the profits went into reinvestments while the typical manufacturers lived rather modestly. It is this ascetic policy of early European capitalism which made possible the phenomenal rise of working class standards. Seeing that the manufacturers did not live a life of splendor (as did the big landowners) the workers at first viewed their lot with surprising equanimity. The Socialist impetus came from middle class intellectuals, eccentric industrialists (like Robert Owen and Engels) and impoverished noblemen with a feeling of resentment against the existing order.

As one can imagine, the artificially created ire then was turned first against the manufacturer who, after all, is nothing but some sort of *broker* between the worker and the public. He enables the worker to transform his work into goods. In this process he incurs various expenses, such as for tools, and a part of the costs of market-

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ing. He hopes to make a profit from these transactions in order to render his efforts worth while. Curiously enough, his responsibility toward the enterprise is of far greater scope than that of many workers. No wonder that the interest, once centered on accidents in the factories, is shifting more and more to the manager diseases. The entrepreneur sacrifices not only his "nerves" but also his peace of mind. If he fails, he fails not himself alone; the bread of dozens, of hundreds, of thousands of families hangs in the balance. The situation is not very different in a stock company. There, the stockholders sometimes make profits in the form of dividends – and sometimes they do not. The worker *always* expects to be paid. The bigger risks are thus at the top, not at the bottom.

Yet, how well the worker is paid depends on several factors, the first of which is the readiness of consumers to pay for the finished goods a price high enough to warrant high wages. Here we come to the brokerage side of the capitalist. Secondly, there is the decision of the entrepreneur (sometimes the stockholders) how much of the gross profits will be distributed (as dividends, bonuses, and the like) and how much should be reinvested or laid aside. It is evident that the enterprise, being competitive, has to "look ahead" in a far more concrete way than does the often improvident worker. The business usually must be planned years ahead. It not only has to adopt the best means of production (which means the purchase of new expensive machinery), but also needs financial assets as reserves. Finally, the wages have to be in a sound relationship to the marketing possibilities, and also to the quality of the work done, the sense of duty of the workers and employees. Virtue enters the picture. Even the net profits paid out are not necessarily a "loss" to the workers, because a profitable enterprise attracts investors; what is good for the enterprise obviously is good for its workers.

There is a commonalty of interests which can be gravely upset by either side. Needless to say, the most common way to upset the applecart is through excessive wage demands which, if yielded to, tend to eliminate the profits and to make the merchandise unmarketable. Politically organized workers also may pressure governments into inflationary policies. Strikes cancel production for a given period and mean economic loss. The inability to sell due to excessive wages and prices or to protracted strikes can bankrupt the economy.

This mutual relationship be-

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tween costs of production and purchasing power is frequently overlooked – especially in the so-called "developing nations." The insistence on "a living wage," often by well-meaning Christian critics, in many cases cannot be met without pricing the products out of the market. Such critics forget that workers might prefer to work at a low wage rather than not to work at all.

Saving Begins at Home

One thing is certain: *nascent industrial economies have to start on an ascetic, a Spartan level.* This is true of all economies, free or socialistic. The apologists of the USSR can well use this argument in the defense of Soviet economies in their initial stage, but *only up to a point:* the introduction of socialism in Russia effected immediately a tremendous decline of working-class, peasant-class, and middle-class living standards which, compared with 1916 levels, have *improved only in spots.* Large sectors still are worse off than before the Revolution. A microscopic minority, however, lives very well indeed.[1] In the meantime, free economies have made such enormous strides that the gap between Russia and the West is greater than in 1916. There are two reasons for this state of affairs. First, the Eastern Bloc with the exception of Soviet-occupied Germany, Latvia, and Estonia, completely lacks the famous "Protestant Work Ethic." Secondly, free enterprise is basically more productive than state capitalism because of: (a) the snowballing of millions of individual ambitions into a huge avalanche, (b) the element of competition based on free consumer choice which improves quality and efficiency, (c) the strictly non-political management based on efficiency and responsibility.

So, whence comes the wave of hatred directed against free enterprise? Dissatisfied intellectuals designing utopias and decadent noblemen do not account entirely for the phenomenon. Though nascent capitalism has not yet "delivered the goods" (children can only show promise, no more) mature capitalism has proved that it can provide. Empirically speaking, capitalism has justified itself in comparison with socialism (for the existence of which we have to be grateful in this one respect).

The assaults against free enterprise are launched with the help of theories and of sentiments, sometimes working hand in hand. Frequently these attacks are made *indirectly,* for instance, by criticizing technology. This critique

[1] See "Free Enterprise and the Russians," *The Freeman,* August, 1972.

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might be genuine, but often serves as a detour. Much of the current antipollution campaign is subconsciously directed at capitalism via technology. (This particular problem is less acute in the Socialist World only because it is less industrialized; it is nevertheless amusing to see the Left embracing all the idle dreams of the old conservative agrarian romanticism.) However, if we examine closely the attack against free enterprise, we find the following elements:

• (1) The charge that business cycles are the consequence of freedom rather than political intervention, though proof to the contrary is well established.

• (2) The attack against the man-consuming, soul-killing, slave-driving forms of modern production. In this domain, however, the main culprit is the machine rather than the human factor. Technology *per se* is strictly disciplinarian. In this respect, socialism or communism would not bring the slightest alleviation. On the contrary! Let us remember the ideal of the Stakhanovite, the absence in socialist countries of genuine labor unions, the limitless means the totalitarian state has for coercion, regulations, and controls. We must bear in mind that the free world also has a competitive labor market. Man can *choose* the place and conditions of his work.

• (3) The critique of "monopoly capitalism," shared in a milder way by the "Neo-Liberal" school, is opposed to all forms of bigness. Still, in the free world we find that most countries have legislation against monopolies *in order to keep competition alive*, to give the consumer a real choice. Any criticism of monopolies by a socialist is hypocritical, because socialism means total monopoly, the state being the only entrepreneur.

Deeper Resentments

Yet these attacks are frequently only rationalizations of much deeper resentments. At the very roots of anticapitalism we have the theological problem of man's rebellion against Original Sin or, to put it in secular terms, his vain protest against the human condition. By this we mean the curse to which we are subject, the necessity to work by the sweat of our brow. The worker is in harness, but so is the manager and so is everybody else. For this uninspiring, sometimes unpleasant state of affairs, the average man will stick the guilt on somebody; capitalism serves as the convenient scapegoat. Of course, work could be greatly reduced if one were willing to accept a much lower living

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standard – which few people want to do. Without the opportunities free enterprise provides for highly profitable work, the living standards would go down to early medieval levels. Still, the resentment against this order is directed not so much against an abstraction – such is human nature – as against *persons*. Thus, the culprit is taken to be the "Establishment" – of the "capitalists."

This gives us a hint as to the nature of the anticapitalism which has more and more surfaced since the French Revolution and the decline of Christianity: *envy*. Ever since 1789, the secret of political success has been the mobilization of majorities against unpopular minorities endowed with certain "privileges" – particularly financial privileges. Thus, in the nineteenth century, the "capitalist" appeared to be the man who enjoyed considerable wealth though he apparently "did not work" and derived a vast income from the toil of the workers "who have to slave for him." Apart from the incontrovertible fact that they mostly "slave for themselves," there is *some* truth to this.

The Entrepreneurial Role

Almost every worker will usually contribute in a minor way to the income of the entrepreneur or of the stockholders. This is perfectly natural because a broker must always be paid; and an entrepreneur, as we have said before, is actually a broker between the worker and the consumer by providing the former with the necessary tools and guidance in production. (The merchant is a subbroker between the manufacturer and the public.) It is also natural to pay for borrowed tools for the simple reason that their value is diminished by use. (Thus the traveling salesman will have to pay for a rented car, the commercial photographer for a rented camera, and so forth.) Beyond this, the entrepreneur (who is, as we have seen, a broker as well as a lender) takes the risk of failure and bankruptcy. This situation also may be encountered in the USSR where anyone can get an "unearned income" for money he puts into a savings bank or where he can buy a lottery ticket. The purchase of such a ticket is based on an expectation (i.e., to make a profit) but also entails a risk (i.e., not to win anything).

Risk characterizes all of human existence: to make an effort without exactly foreseeing its success. Thus, a writer starting a novel or a painter putting the first lines on his canvas is not sure whether he can transform his vision into reality. He might fail. Often he does. The farmer with his crop is in the

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same boat. But the typical worker entering the factory can be certain that he will be paid at week's end. It should be noted here that in Austria and Germany, for instance, the industrial laborer works an average of 43 hours a week (the 40-hour week is in the offing), while the self-employed put in an average of 62.5 hours a week. In other words, the rule within our mature economy is this: the "higher up," the greater the work effort – and the higher, too, the work ethics; the slack employee cheats the employer but the slack employer only cheats himself.

Facts and Fiction

The trouble, as Goetz Briefs once pointed out, is that the current notions about the profits of the capitalists are totally out of touch with reality.[2] The reason for these wrong ideas is partly mathematical! Let us look at some statistics. Too many people think that a radical redistribution of profits would truly benefit "the little man." But what do the figures tell us? According to the *Economic Almanac,* 1962, published by the National Industrial Conference Board, (page 115), of the national income in the United States, the compensation of employees amounted to 71 per cent; the self-employed earned 11.9 per cent, the farmers 3.1 per cent. Corporation profits before taxes were 9.7 per cent of the total national income (after taxes only 4.9 per cent) and dividends paid out were 3.4 per cent. Interest paid to creditors amounted to 4.7 per cent of the national income. Yet, were the recipients of these dividends and interest payments all "capitalists"? How many workers, retired farmers, widows, benevolent associations, and educational institutions were among them? Would this sum, evenly divided among all Americans, materially improve their lot? Of course not.

In other parts of the world the situation is not much different. According to earlier statistics (1958), if all German incomes were to be reduced to a maximum of 1000 Marks (then $250.00) a month and every citizen given an even share of the surplus, this share would have amounted to 4 cents a day. A similar calculation, expropriating all Austrian monthly incomes of 1000 dollars or more, would in 1960 have given each Austrian citizen an additional 1¼ cents a day!

But, let us return to corporate profits. The 13 largest Italian companies composed in 1965 a full-page advertisement which

[2] *Das Gewerkschaftsproblem gestern und heute.* (Frankfurt am Main: Knapp, 1955), p. 98.

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they tried to place in the leading dailies of the Peninsula. This statement told at a glance what the dividends had been in 1963, what they were over a 10-year period, what salaries and wages were paid, how much industry contributed to social security and old-age pensions. The relationship between the dividends and labor cost was roughly 1 to 12. The companies added that the estimated number of shareholders (obviously from many walks of life) was over half a million – double the number of the employees. Interestingly and significantly enough, two of the dailies refused to carry the paid advertisement: one was the Communist *Unità,* the other the Papal *Osservatore Romano* whose excuse was that it was published in Vatican City, which means outside of the Italian State.

Rooted in Envy

To the advocate of equality, the fact that certain individuals live much better than others seems to be "unbearable". The internal revenue policies which try to "soak the rich" often have their roots in man's envy. It seems useless to demonstrate that a redistribution of wealth would be of no advantage to the many or that an oppressive tax policy directed against the well-to-do is self-defeating for a country's economy. One usually will get the reply that in a democracy a fiscal policy which might be economically sound could be politically unacceptable – and vice versa. Pointing out that the spending of wealthy persons is good for the nation as a whole may bring the snap reaction that *"nobody* should have that much money." Yet, people who earn huge sums usually have taken extraordinary risks or are performing extraordinary services. Some of them are inventors. Let us assume that somebody invents an effective drug against cancer and thereby earns a hundred million dollars. (Certainly, those who suffer from cancer would not begrudge him his wealth.) Unless he buries this sum in his garden, he would help by lending to others (through banks, for instance) and by purchasing liberally from others. The only reason to object to his wealth would be sheer envy. (I would add here that had it not been for the liberality of monarchs, popes, bishops, aristocrats, and patricians it would not be worthwhile for an American to pay a nickel to see Europe. The landscape is more grandiose in the New World.)

Still, it is significant that one of the few outstanding Christian sociologists in Europe, Father Oswald von Nell-Breuning, SJ, not noted for conservative leanings, has recently *(Zur Debatte,* Mu-

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nich, February 1972) taken a firm stand against the myths of the beneficient effects of the redistribution of wealth. As one of the architects of the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* he emphasized that Pius XI was thoroughly cognizant with this incontrovertible fact but that, in the meantime, this knowledge has been nearly lost and that therefore demagogical ideas have largely invaded Catholic sociological and economic thinking. Especially in the domain of "Third World" economic problems, the learned Jesuit hinted, the hue and cry for "distributive justice" has done a great deal of mischief.

It has become fashionable to attack free enterprise on moral grounds. There are people among us, many of them well-meaning, idealistic Christians, who freely admit that "capitalism delivers the goods," that it is far more efficient than socialism, but that it is *ethically* on a lower plane. It is denounced as egotistic and materialistic. Of course, life on earth is a vale of tears and no system, political, social or economic, can claim perfection. Yet, the means of production can only be owned privately, *or* by the State. State ownership of all means of production certainly is not conducive to liberty. It is totalitarianism. It involves state control of all media of expression. (In Nazi Germany private ownership existed *de jure*, but certainly not *de facto*.) The remark of Roepke is only too true, that in a free enterprise system the supreme sanction comes from the bailiff, but in a totalitarian tyranny from the hangman.

The Christian insistence on freedom – the monastic vows are voluntary sacrifices of a select few – derives from the Christian concept that man must be free in order to act morally. (A sleeping, a chained and clubbed, a drugged person can neither be sinful nor virtuous.) Yet, the free world which is practically synonymous with the world of free enterprise, alone provides a climate, a way of life compatible with the dignity of man who makes free decisions, enjoys privileges, assumes responsibilities, and develops his talents as he sees fit. He is truly the steward of his family. He can buy, sell, save, invest, gamble, plan the future, build, retrench, acquire capital, make donations, take risks. In other words, he can be the master of his economic fate and act as a man instead of a sheep in a herd under a shepherd and his dogs. No doubt, free enterprise is a harsh system; it demands real men. But socialism, which appeals to envious people craving for security and afraid to decide for themselves, impairs human dignity and crushes man utterly.

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The American Economy IS NOT Depression-Proof

HANS F. SENNHOLZ

MOST contemporary economists are fully convinced that a major depression of the 1929-1941 variety cannot happen again. It is inconceivable, they say, that the American economy should fall again into such an abyss of despair when more than 13 million Americans were unemployed, when banks and businesses failed by scores and countless farmers lost their land, when nearly everyone suffered painful losses of wealth and income. The tragedy of the Great Depression lives on as a nightmare that frightens everyone especially during periods of recession or stagnation. But our politicians and their learned advisors, the economists, assure us almost in unison that they will not let it happen again. They are solemnly pledging the awesome power of government to prevent another depression.

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The sincerity of their intentions is no more to be doubted than the good will of the policymakers of the Hoover and Roosevelt era who were engulfed by the Great Depression. But it may be questioned that we have learned to avoid the dreadful errors of policy that caused and prolonged the disaster. If we repeat the errors that generated the Great Depression, inexorable economic law assures that it must happen again.

Have our policymakers learned the lessons of the Great Depression? Their explanations and intrepretations of economc decline differ little from those offered by the politicians of the 1920's and 1930's. And contemporary economic policies, although far more comprehensive and massive in scope and import, are similar to those conducted by the Hoover and Roosevelt Administrations.

Most economists echo the explanation given by the most famous

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and influential economist of our century, John Maynard Keynes. Unemployment and depression are the inevitable result of inadequate effective demand, according to Keynes. Therefore, monetary and fiscal policy should be employed to increase aggregate demand. The nominal amount of money should be increased, which in the short run would cause interest rates to fall, investments to increase, and income to rise. But in case monetary policy would be ineffective, because falling money velocity may counteract an increase in the quantity of money, he recommended direct government investment through government tax cutting and deficit spending.[1]

Influential Keynesian disciples, such as Alvin H. Hansen[2], Paul A. Samuelson[3], and Abba P. Lerner[4] played a major role in bringing the Keynesian system to America. They recommended that the government implement a continuous policy of full employment regardless of the state of the budget, which became the law of the land in the Full Employment Act of 1946. And all Federal administrations from Truman to Nixon have since then followed the policy recommendations of the "new economics."

Spendthrift Policies

Most of the "new policies" were already being implemented during the 1920's and 1930's. The spectacular crash of 1929 followed four years of considerable credit expansion by the Federal Reserve System under the Coolidge Administration. But it is futile to look back in history without the proper theoretical framework that explains causes and consequences. The Keynesian historian views past experiences in his peculiar light and therefore quickly rejects all other interpretations. To him, the 200-year history of business cycles is a long record of economic disequilibria that are caused by inadequate effective demand.

This explanation, which has elevated inadequate demand or "underconsumption" to the guiding principle of contemporary economic policy, has been the battle cry

1 John M. Keynes, *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1936), p. 250; also Alvin H. Hansen, *A Guide to Keynes* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1953), pp. 21-22.

2 *Monetary Theory and Fiscal Policy* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1949); *Business Cycles and National Income* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1951).

3 *The Collected Scientific Papers of Paul A. Samuelson*, ed. Joseph Stiglitz (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966); *Economics*, 8th ed. (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1970).

4 "A Program for Monetary Stability," in *Proceedings*, Conference on Savings and Residential Financing (Chicago, Ill.: 1962); *The Economics of Control* (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1944).

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of the spendthrifts of all ages. And countless monarchs and princes rallied in ready acceptance of such doctrines that seemed to justify conspicuous consumption and deficit spending. But unfortunately, their policies always resulted not only in greater misery and poverty of the populace but also instability of state and society. The major political and social upheavals in Western history normally followed years of general impoverishment through wasteful consumption by the monarch or expensive wars staged by the state.

Booms and depressions do not spring from economic freedom and the individual enterprise system. On the contrary, they inevitably result from government disturbances of a peaceful market society. In particular, they follow policies of inflation and credit expansion that are designed to finance government deficit spending or to facilitate greater business expenditures. Ludwig von Mises has clearly shown how the creation of money and credit by our monetary authorities falsifies interest rates and thus misguides businessmen in their investment decisions. The boom phase of the trade cycle is a period of maladjustment in which economic resources are wasted and misused because of false interest rates. Consumer choices and preferences are ignored because the government, instead of the people, is giving the signals in the capital market.[5]

When the economic boom finally causes business costs to soar and capital returns to fall until great losses are suffered, a recession inevitably sets in. It is unavoidable once monetary authorities have generated the maladjustment through deficit spending or credit expansion. The unemployment of labor and capital must continue as long as the economic structure remains maladjusted through government intervention in the capital and labor markets. The Great Depression taught us this very lesson at a horrendous price.[6]

Booms Applauded, Recessions Deplored

Representatives of the "new economics" never object to the boom phase of the cycle. In fact, they may applaud it as "great years of uninterrupted economic growth," or as a "new plateau," or "new stability." But when the economy finally begins to sag and unemployment quickly rises, they re-

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[5] Cf. Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1949). p. 538 *et seq.*; also *The Theory of Money and Credit* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 339 *et seq.*

[6] Cf. Murray Rothbard, *America's Great Depression* (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand, 1963).

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member their Keynesian recipes: spend more and inflate more.

Obviously, the maladjustment that was generated by government interference with the capital market cannot be alleviated by more such interference. The drug addict who is suffering painful withdrawal symptoms cannot be cured by prescribing larger doses of the same drug. But this is precisely the kind of advice Keynesian economists give to their governments. When the national economy begins to falter, they call for more inflation and credit expansion, the very cause of the dilemma. True, the creation and injection of new funds may temporarily prolong the boom by supporting the maladjustments and generating new ones, as the injection of harder drugs in the human body may at first reduce the pain. But to administer ever harder drugs must finally kill the patient, as the injection of ever larger quantities of new funds must destroy the currency through hyperinflation and economic disintegration.

In fact, after several decades of Keynesian policies, we seem to have reached the point where only massive doses of inflation still stimulate the economic patient. Previous rates of inflation, to which we have grown accustomed and learned to adjust, no longer work as stimuli; businessmen immediately adjust to the rates they anticipate. A five per cent rate that has been foreseen well in advance no longer stimulates the economy when it is finally administered. Only higher rates than anticipated still have such an effect. This is also why the Federal deficits must get bigger and bigger. But while the rate of inflation must accelerate in order to provide the Keynesian stimulant, the monetary destruction also accelerates.

In the end, government faces an inescapable alternative: to accelerate its spending and inflating to total monetary destruction, or abandon its policy and thereby save the currency. If it chooses the former, it precipitates a depression through economic disintegration; if it chooses the latter, the depression that was delayed for so long finally will erupt in full severity. No matter which course the government eventually chooses, the contra-cyclical policies are bound to fail. The Keynesian recipe does not make the economy depression-proof. It merely postpones the depression through monetary destruction and thereby makes it worse.

Government Safeguards are Illusory

The followers of Keynes are not the only economists who are convinced that a depression can never

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happen again. The monetarists, while rejecting the contra-cyclical recipes of the "new economics," deny the possibility of economic depressions on other grounds. "There have been fundamental changes in institutions and attitudes in the United States since the Great Depression," Prof. Friedman reassures us.[7] They are rendering a major depression in the United States "almost inconceivable."

Establishment of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in 1933, we are told, was a basic change in American banking that made bank failures "almost a thing of the past." By converting all deposit liabilities of private banks into a Federal liability, the F.D.I.C. eliminated the basic cause for runs on banks, which was the depositors' attempt to convert their claims into Federal currency. Since both deposits and currency are now Federal liabilities, an important cause of credit contractions and economic depressions is said to have been removed.

These economists err in their basic assumption that a depression can be avoided if only monetary contractions can be avoided. Once the malinvestments have been made and the boom has run its course, the readjustment must necessarily be painful. The depression is an unavoidable phase of the trade cycle once it has commenced. For the central bank then to embark upon credit expansion, in an attempt to prevent the liquidation of malinvestment, can only delay the recovery and thus prolong the depression.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation that, in effect, makes every bank deposit a government liability is designed to prevent the needed liquidation. Of course, it can do this successfully and thus delay the readjustment if newly created funds are used for the rescue action. But where would the government obtain the funds necessary to prevent massive liquidation of bank credit? From its central bank, of course. The stabilizing power of the F.D.I.C., in final analysis, is nothing but the government power to create and emit new money. Therefore, it is necessary to repeat the answer given to the Keynesian spenders: more inflation can merely postpone a depression through monetary destruction and ultimately make it worse.

Deficit Financing

Another change in banking structure that is said to assure economic stability has been the in-

7 "Why the American Economy is Depression-Proof" in *Dollars and Deficits* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 74.

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creased importance of government obligations; the phenomenal growth in government debt has made government liabilities an important part of bank assets, which afford greater stability to the stock of money and credit.

This increased importance of government obligations as bank assets imparts such great confidence to some economists. To others, however, it is a cause for anxiety. It is indicative not only of the changing role of American banking from mediators of credit to fiscal agents of the Federal treasury, but also of the great reliance on the inflationary powers of government. What would be the status of government obligations without the inflation powers to support them? Every budgetary deficit would send U.S. Treasury obligations to new discounts if it were not for the open-market purchases by the Federal Reserve System. But this very support through monetary expansion, while it may succeed in the short run, tends to be self-defeating in the long run as it raises interest rates and thus reduces the market prices of fixed-income obligations. This is why government securities in bank portfolios have been very poor investments ever since World War II, which banks endeavor to avoid wherever possible. In fact, long-term U.S. Treasury obligations have at times, when interest rates rose significantly, inflicted crushing losses on American banks, losses which dubious accounting practices endeavor to hide. The banking losses then provide an important motive for early resumption of credit expansion.

The Dethroning of Gold

Finally, many of the monetarist economists rejoice about the severing of all links between gold and the internal supply of money. The "dethroning of gold" is said to reduce the sensitivity of the stock of money to changes in external conditions. Removal of gold from public circulation has made us independent at last from the vagaries of foreign influence. Thereby we would avoid monetary contraction which is "an essential conditioning factor for the occurrence of a major depression."

What these economists call the "dethroning" of gold is rather a "default" of paper. After all, it was the creation of massive quantities of money substitutes that caused central banks to default on their obligation to redeem their currencies in gold. But this default did not bring stability and prosperity. On the contrary, it opened the gates for massive inflation and economic instability. The fiat standard is more unstable than the gold-exchange standard,

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which afforded less stability than the gold-bullion standard, which in turn was less stable than the classical gold-coin standard. It is true, the default in gold payments did stop the runs on banks; no one in his right senses would want to run for paper money the supply of which is potentially unlimited. But the fiat standard does not make us independent of the vagaries of foreign influence. It has made the international money market more vulnerable than ever before. The U.S. dollar is stumbling from crisis to crisis, with grave dangers to international trade and cooperation and, ultimately, to the stability of the American economy itself.

It is not alone the new monetary structure that affords some economists so much confidence in the lasting stability of the American economy. There is also the fiscal structure. "There can be no disagreement," Professor Friedman asserts, "that the fiscal structure is now an exceedingly important and powerful 'built-in stabilizer'."[8] Government expenditures, both national and local, now amount to more than one-third of the national income. Although the relative growth of government casts somber prospects for political freedom, it is argued that the change in the character of both expenditures and receipts has stabilizing effects on the business cycle. A broad program of social security, unemployment insurance, and a farm program that supports product prices, all tend to increase government expenditures in depression and to reduce them in prosperity. The same contra-cyclical effects are derived from personal and corporation income taxation, which in boom or recession automatically creates budget surpluses or deficits and thereby offsets from 30 to 40 per cent of any national income change. So goes their theory.

Loaded for Stability

This doctrine of the built-in stabilizers calls to mind the story of the farmer who, before leaving for the market in town, loaded his pack mule with an exceptionally heavy load of potatoes. When his neighbor inquired about the reason for the heavy load the farmer retorted with a gesture of great learning: "On the muddy road to town the beast needs stability. The heavier the load the greater the stability!"

A bit of plain horse sense ought to tell us that the growing costs of government do not afford stability; on the contrary, they are making the "private sector" that is carrying the growing burden of the "public sector" ever more ane-

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

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mic and unstable. True, the heavy burdens can be lightened through massive monetary depreciation. The automatic deficits, from rising expenditures and declining tax revenues during recession, can be financed through currency expansion. But as the Keynesian contra-cyclical policies fail to impart stability to the American economy, so do the automatic fiscal stabilizers.

Finally, we are told that there has been an important change in the psychological climate of America. Before the Great Depression, according to this view, we were more afraid of inflation than of deflation; we wanted "hard money" at all costs. But the Great Depression has changed all that. It has caused public opinion to swing from one extreme to the other. That is why today, after decades of rising prices and monetary depreciation, the public is still seized by a real fear of depression. What the people may not realize, warn the monetarists, is that the ultimate destination of those who follow the path of inflation is destruction of the currency.

One may fully agree that the ultimate effect of these built-in stabilizers is monetary destruction. But what is one to make of the swinging theory? The American public has approved inflation and credit expansion ever since the Coolidge Administration, clung to easy money throughout the 1930's, endorsed rampant wartime inflation during the 1940's, heralded the contra-cyclical policies during the 1950's, applauded the accelerator policies of the 1960's, and still continues to rely on massive deficit spending. The fever of inflation that has infected American economic thought and policy is rising steadily and dangerously. And while it rages, neither the body politic nor the American economy is depression-proof.

The Consumer Theory of Prosperity

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

THE USUAL effect of the attempts of government to encourage consumption is merely to prevent saving; that is, to promote unproductive consumption at the expense of reproductive, and diminish the national wealth by the very means which were intended to increase it.

JOHN STUART MILL, *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy.*

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PAUL L. POIROT

A PECULIAR tendency of thinking human beings is to behave, not necessarily in response to the facts of a given situation, but in response to what they believe is the situation.

Men who believe there are different kinds of inflation may be convinced that different cures are needed. For instance, if it is a "cost push" inflation, and high wages are believed to be the cost of production most responsible for the extra push, then the obvious cure would seem to be a rollback or other control of wage rates.

Or, if high profits are believed to be responsible for pushing prices upward, then the most likely cure would be an "excess-profits" tax or some such limitation of profits.

The latest new kind of inflation is alleged to be "social inflation" – due to the extra expense of cleaning up air and water, fostering "consumerism," meeting other social goals. And when the doctors of the sick body politic get around to it, they might possibly come to believe that the cure for social inflation is to clamp a lid on Federal spending.

In view of the widespread disagreement about the facts concerning inflation in the United States of America in 1972, let us imagine a comparable situation at some other time and place. Let's say it's the year of the millennium in Utopia and see if we can visualize the facts. Let's further imagine that the residents of Utopia are as bright on the whole as we are, living under what is generally described as a free market economy with quite a lot of government intervention.

For the sake of simplicity let's say that about a third of the laborers in Utopia are members of a union under the leadership of Mr.

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Goody. And Mr. Goody says to the boys, "Let's have some inflation; instead of the going wage of $3.00 an hour, we'll demand $6.00." But in Utopia there is no way to force an employer to hire anyone at $6.00 an hour if he doesn't want to; there's no way to force a consumer to buy labor or its product at $6.00 an hour. So Mr. Goody might have some $6.00 unemployment, but no $6.00 labor; and there's practically nothing laborers can do to bring about wage-push inflation.

In Utopia, when a businessman decides to have a little inflation, raise his prices 5 per cent to double his profits, a funny thing happens. Consumers decide they'll buy from other suppliers instead, at the old price; and some businesses change ownership, but there isn't any inflation.

However, when the people of Utopia ask the government to provide additional services without increasing taxes, and the government finances its deficits by printing additional money, then there is inflation in Utopia, "social inflation" caused by pumping nothing but money into the market.

Inflation in Utopia is strictly a monetary phenomenon. If the government prints the money, it is called social inflation. If anyone else prints it, it is called counterfeiting. And that's the fact, the only relevant fact pertaining to inflation – in Utopia, that is.

We mentioned earlier the possibility that once we've identified this new kind of "social inflation" that plagues the United States in 1972, then perhaps one of the doctors might find a workable cure.

Not bad for a start is advice from Andrew F. Brimmer, member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System:

"Despite our obvious affluence as a nation, we do not have the capacity to produce enough so that households can maximize their consumption – while minimizing taxes; so that an adequate volume of housing can be built; so that businesses can expand their production facilities at a maximum rate – and also make the investment needed to abate pollution; so that governments can meet the increasing demand for public services – while tax revenues lag behind spending."[1]

What the good doctor seems to be prescribing is exercise – of self-reliance and will power. If we don't like inflation then ask the government to stop pampering us and tampering with the money supply and stick to its more appropriate governmental function of policing the market; otherwise leave us alone.

[1] Quoted in *U. S. News and World Report*, June 12, 1972, p. 39.

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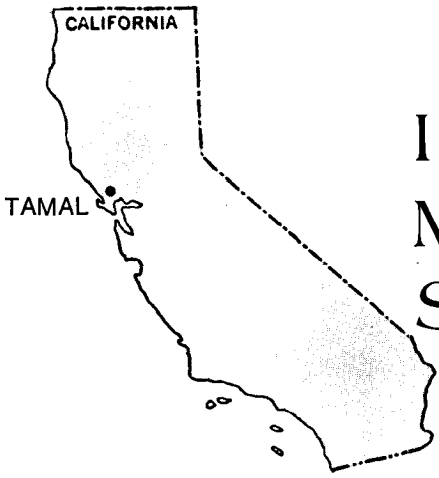

I Visit a Managed Society

ORIEN JOHNSON

I HAD HEARD of a little town in California which was credited with being an example of efficient government, and one which did an admirable job of providing for the needs of its citizens. I determined to go there some time and see for myself if these things were true, and if so, to bring back some ideas that might prove helpful to citizens of other communities.

This small town of Tamal, with a population of about 2,000 people, was established in 1852 on the shore of beautiful San Francisco Bay, just 20 miles north of the City of San Francisco. In the early days the chief industry was the manufacture of gunny sacks and other rough cordage products made of jute. In April, 1951, a disastrous fire burned the huge mill to the ground at an estimated loss of $3,000,000 which left 1,000 men without a job. Gradually other industries were begun. A mattress factory, a cotton textile mill, a large laundry, a detergent plant, a clothing factory, a large furniture factory and several other industries now provide most of the employable residents with jobs.

An official publication described some of the services provided for residents of this unusual community which made me even more anxious to visit the place and to talk to someone who might be enjoying these benefits.

I read that three-fourths of the residents are presently engaged in some aspect of education in a free school system beginning with elementary grades on through junior college level. Half of the students attend classes in the evenings. In addition to teaching skills and vocational training, the instructors

Mr. Johnson, of Mountain View, California, is a counselor in public relations and fund raising.

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are "skilled in group behavior." They train students in "terminus goals, inter-personal relationships, proper acceptance of job, work, completion of goals, and to operate cooperatively under supervision."

There are no unions in this town. Instead, a Trade Advisory Committee, representing both management and labor, works to "aid in defining training standards, establishing completion criteria and assistance in job placement." They are concerned with both "vocational competence and the development of constructive social attitudes."

An extensive free recreational program includes several well-equipped play fields and courts for individual and competitive sports, and facilities for staging music and variety shows by resident or visiting talent.

I was amazed to note that none of the residents ever apply for Medicare simply because all of the medical facilities of a 150-bed fully accredited hospital, an outstanding therapy X-ray unit, and services of well-qualified consultants and specialists of the San Francisco Bay Area are readily available, and all at no cost to any of the patients.

In spite of these many benefits, I noticed a paragraph describing the work of the Narcotic Treatment Control Unit which is a live-in situation treating a large number of persons with drug abuse problems. A copy of the weekly newspaper lists the regular meetings of an Alcoholics Anonymous chapter. Serious crimes also make headlines in this newspaper from time to time, mostly of a violent nature such as stabbings, clubbings, fights, riotings and murders. Evidently, not all is as idyllic as one would presume in this managed society.

Meet Lamar Knighton

I finally got a lead on a man who worked as a linotypist on the local newspaper and found out he would be glad to meet with me and answer any questions I might have about life as he saw it in this welfare city. I found also that this man was a reader of *The Freeman* magazine and that he subscribed fully to the libertarian philosophies of its articles.

I arranged a time to go to Tamal and to look up my new friend, Lamar Knighton, to determine, if possible, how he squared his philosophies with his life.

The fog was just beginning to lift as I drove into town. Seagulls were wheeling in circles above the shore as I slowed my car to enjoy the view of the islands in the Bay. A row of small, run-down houses lined the street overlooking the

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water. The other side of the street dropped off in a grassy meadow to the shore.

After I'd driven about three blocks the street was completely blocked with a huge iron gate. A sign pointed to a parking lot; I found a place to park my car, and walked back to a small building at the gate.

A large, muscular guard, dressed in an olive-colored uniform asked me who I wanted to see.

"Lamar Knighton," I said.

He shuffled through some files in a cabinet and asked for some identification. I showed my driver's license, and he asked me to sign in on a large register book. A buzzer unlocked the door and I walked about 100 yards to another small building. Here I was asked to empty my pockets into a tray on a counter and step through a metal-detector gate.

My next stop was a waiting room where I was told I might sit to wait while Lamar was located and paged. In about thirty minutes a voice sounded over the speaker system, "Knighton visitor." A man nodded toward a door.

I walked up two steps and through the door into a large room. There I saw several rows of long tables running the length of the room with people sitting on each side. On one side sat men, women, and children. On the other side sat only men dressed in blue-jeans and blue shirts.

A voice said, "Mr. Johnson?" I saw a handsome man about 35 years old who introduced himself to me. "I'm Lamar Knighton," he said. "Glad to see you, neighbor."

I said, "Well, I'm glad to see you finally. I had to go through a lot of red tape, but here I am."

We started talking and I learned that Lamar was a native of Texas, had once been a meatcutter, had served a hitch in the Army, and was now operating the linotype machine in the newspaper office. We started talking about liberty and Lamar told me of his special interest in the subject and how he spends most of his spare time writing essays which he sends to anyone who will read them.

What Is Liberty?

I had to attend to some business in San Francisco, but promised to write and to come back for other visits. I signed out and walked to the parking area. The gulls were still tracing lazy freedom circles in the breeze. A few sailboats dotted the Bay. The wind whistled through the tall pine trees on the point. "What is liberty?" I asked myself as I looked back at a stone tower manned with armed guards who would shoot to kill any unauthorized person who attempted to escape from that *managed so-*

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ciety. Surely I could answer that simple question after such a visit. But my thoughts refused to focus. I wanted only to *experience* the liberty I now enjoyed. My eyes turned again to the free-flying birds. My ears caught the sighing in the trees. I breathed deeply of the fresh salt air. I picked up a stone and splashed it into the waves. These were the symbols that translated all my philosophies into experiential realities. This I knew as freedom. I needed no words. They would come later as I would challenge Lamar to interpret his freedom concepts as a prisoner in San Quentin penitentiary.

Permission was granted to me to visit this man in the famous 120-year-old institution through the courtesy of a new nonprofit group known as Job Therapy of California. Part of its service is the man-to-man (M-2) visitation program in which citizens volunteer to make one visit a month to a prisoner. I had signed up as a sponsor and was matched with Lamar Knighton, who also had volunteered for the program. My only other commitment is that I will meet Lamar at the gate of San Quentin on the day of his release, and spend the day with him as he begins a new life on the outside. I am not to give or lend him any money, nor take him to stay in my home. I serve only as a friend, to encourage him to earn his own way and build the kind of life that will be most helpful to himself.

Doing an Article . . .

After several visits in which we exchanged ideas we had discovered from books and periodicals, our friendship began to grow. Between visits we would write essays on various aspects of freedom. I resolved on my next visit to get Lamar's view of the managed society in which he lived. On this particular day I took the freeway that runs along the beautiful coastal range that extends from San Francisco down the Peninsula. Patches of fog were clinging to the top of the redwood hills and a brisk wind tossed whitecaps across the Bay and under the Golden Gate Bridge.

The same guard in the gatehouse asked the same familiar question: "Who do you want to visit?"

"Lamar Knighton," I replied.

"Please show your identification." I produced my driver's license.

"Sign in, please." I signed my name in the visitor's register and the time (9:40 A.M.) in the appropriate spot.

"What do you have in the briefcase?" he asked.

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"Some papers," I said. "I'm doing an article for a magazine and want to ask Lamar some questions."

"That's really not supposed to be done," he said. "Tell the guard at the desk in the visiting room so he'll know what you're doing."

"Okay," I promised and began the walk to the next building. I wonder what that rule is for, I asked myself. I'm not the prisoner. Why do they put such restrictions on me? I'm getting a real taste of the managed society. A man in front of me was having difficulty clearing the metal detector. Every time he walked past the machine it blinked a red light and emitted a sharp buzz. Everything was removed from all of his pockets; still, the machine was picking up some metal object on his person.

"Take off your belt," the guard said.

The man pulled off his belt and held his pants up as he walked through the space. By this time several other visitors were waiting in line, including wives and girl friends of prisoners, which added to the man's embarrassment as he finished dressing in front of us. I was next and cleared the machine in my first attempt.

Official Delay

At 9:50 I deposited my pass on the desk of the guard in the waiting room and was told to take a seat on the hard oak benches. At 10:50 I was still thumbing through some old magazines, but my visitor hadn't arrived. I waited another 20 minutes and asked the guard if his call for Knighton had gotten through. He picked up the phone and spoke to another guard station. "He's just cleaning up and is on his way in," he said.

At 11:40 – two hours from the time I signed in at the outer gate – a voice came in over the amplifying system, "Knighton visitor."

I saw Lamar sitting at the table and nodded to him as I walked to the elevated guard desk. "I've got some papers with me," I told the guard. "I'll be interviewing my visitor and thought I'd tell you so you'll know what I'm doing."

He shook his head. "I'd better call the Captain," he said. In a few minutes the Captain came in and said, "What's going on here?" I told my story to him, and gave him a weak smile, but it didn't break the ice. He stared at me a moment, then without a word turned and walked off. I took this as some sort of reluctant approval and arranged my pad of papers on the table and started talking to Lamar.

"When did they call you?" I asked.

"Just about ten minutes ago. I came right over."

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When I told him I'd been cooling my heels almost two hours, he smiled knowingly and said, "Now you're beginning to experience a little of what I run into every day. It's all part of the system."

"But don't any of the inmates have anything to say about issues like this?"

"Oh, sure, we can complain, and I will; but they won't pay any attention."

"Surely the inmates have some official avenue of communication to the top," I suggested.

"We have the MAC (Men's Advisory Council)," Lamar said, "but their main hassle is trying to decide which radio station we can listen to. We only have two stations we are allowed to listen to. I would like to get some classical music once in a while, but never get to."

"What about other leisure activities?" I asked.

"We can watch television, read, or talk during *Honor Block*, but all of our other time is supervised."

"What is your work schedule?"

"Seven hours a day for 5 days a week."

"How much are you paid?"

"$7.50."

"An hour?"

"No, a month," he said. "And this is based on your seniority in the job training program."

"Can you strike?"

"Are you kidding?"

"Can you shop around for a better job and compete for higher wages?"

"No. I might apply for another job-training course but wages would have nothing to do with it."

Other Restrictions

He knew what I was doing and began to think of other aspects of his life which might compare with a managed socialist government.

"My travel is of course rigidly restricted and supervised. I have no choice of doctors or hospitals if I get sick. The education is as bad here as it is in any state-controlled system – teachers run through their prescribed courses just to draw their salaries. We have no right to assemble in meetings to hear any views contrary to those of the administration. We have no elections. We couldn't start a new religion of our own, but must take what is provided for us."

"There's another question I must ask," I said. "Do some men get used to this form of life where their physical needs are provided for and everything is managed for them?"

"That's the sad truth," he said. "Some dudes simply don't like to make decisions. They are perfectly willing to have this parent-child relationship for the rest of their

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days. They get released and in a few months back they come. It's a vicious circle. The *managed society,* as you call it, is devastating to our initiative. Being dependent upon the system for our basic needs makes us like children, not men. Then when we get out in competition we can't cut it, so back we come to the parental nest."

"What does that do to you, as a student of liberty and independence?"

"I have to fight it all the time," he said with a sad note in his voice. "It's like a dark blanket of gloom. Most of the guys are shot through with negative thoughts. I come on trying to be cheerful and optimistic and they look at me like I'm a kook. It finally got to me the last couple of weeks. I was hit with a bad case of depression." It occurred to me then that I hadn't received a letter from him and I should have known something was wrong.

Destroying Initiative

Dr. Karl Menninger, in his book, *The Crime of Punishment,* quoted Gresham Sykes (*The Society of Captives*) as saying, "The frustration of the prisoner's ability to make choices and the frequent refusals to provide an explanation for the regulations and commands descending from the bureaucratic staff involve a profound threat to the prisoner's self-image because they reduce the prisoner to the weak, helpless, dependent status of childhood . . . . The imprisoned criminal finds his picture of himself as the self-determining individual being destroyed by the regime of the custodians."

On my way home I drove through the old Haight-Ashbury section of San Francisco. A few years ago this was the mecca of the "flower children" – advocates of the completely undisciplined philosophy of life. Their utopian dream soon collapsed. The buildings are even more run-down than ever. A few miserable heroin addicts shuffle through the streets or sit in a stupor on the steps. The same pallor of gloom that afflicts Lamar in San Quentin hangs heavy over this blighted area. Why did the experiment fail at Haight-Ashbury? Because the flower children were dependent for their existence upon food stamps, welfare checks, the largesse of a few social agencies, and upon drugs to give them a feeling of euphoria to be able to endure such a miserable life. Dependency kept them bound in perpetual childhood just as dependency keeps citizens under the control of a managed government. Children, you know, are much more easily managed than adults.

Before I arrived at my home I began to cool my resentment to-

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ward the unknown guard who neglected to put my call through when he should. After all, I was not a paying customer. His job does not depend upon service, but only upon compliance with regulations. He is paid by the state. Under the same situation I might act with similar discourtesy. And the Captain? He probably deals constantly with lawyers trying to dig up "social injustices" to keep him in eternal hot water. Under similar circumstances my own milk of human kindness might curdle, too. I do not blame these men, nor any of the San Quentin officials. They are doing a thankless job which, under our present system of dealing with criminal offenders, has to be done. But they, too, must resist the pallor of gloom that results from the debilitating effect their managed society produces upon their charges and upon themselves.

I came through this experience resolved to double my efforts to resist a growing climate of opinion aimed at making all men dependent upon a custodial government. The admirable struggle of my new inmate friend was aptly stated in his closing remark during my latest visit. "I am determined not to be conditioned to apathy."

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

There Must Be Freedom

THE MOST DRASTIC deprivation which any person can suffer is that of the freedom to utilize and enjoy the faculties which nature has given him and which his will and desire have developed. Keep a man from exercising his mind, his body, his faculties in the pursuit of his own wishes and delights, keep him from enjoying the fruits of his efforts – and you have done everything evil to him that you can. The greatest desire of each person, in short, is to be free to get the most he can out of life. There is no other way objectively to define social goals than to call them the sum of those individual goals which can be harmonized in society.

SYLVESTER PETRO, *The Labor Policy of the Free Society*

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CLARENCE B. CARSON

THE FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

16

Making the Constitution

. . . I feel it a duty to express my profound and solemn conviction . . . that there never was an assembly of men charged with a great and arduous trust, who were more pure in their motives or more exclusively or anxiously devoted to the object committed to them to . . . best secure the permanent liberty and happiness of their country. — *James Madison*

It is too probable that no plan we propose will be adopted. Perhaps another dreadful conflict is to be sustained. If to please the people, we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterwards defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God.

— *George Washington*

EVEN THOUGH this was an era studded with felicitously worded documents and momentous pronouncements, all of these pale beside the Constitution of 1787 — *the* United States Constitution. It stands alone among them in the impact it has had, in its imitability, and in the role it has had in the lives of generations that were then yet to come.

Dr. Carson recently joined the faculty of Hillsdale College in Michigan as Chairman of the Department of History. He is a noted lecturer and author, his latest book entitled *Throttling the Railroads.*

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All this is quite remarkable. Certainly, Congress envisioned no such document when it sent out a call for a convention. Nor could most of those who assembled in convention see how, at the outset, they could overcome the difficulties in the way of drawing a satisfactory constitution. Even were a masterpiece produced, it appeared most likely that it would be rejected by the states. Few have ever remarked it, yet it may well be that the most amazing thing of all is that the Constitution was not the work of a single man, or even of two or three, but of a convention. It is a commonplace that committees produce little of value; but here, by a group larger than most committees, the exception was made to happen.

Some have described what happened as more than remarkable; it has even been called a miracle. George Washington wrote to Lafayette that it was "little short of a miracle that the delegates from so many different States (which States you know are different from each other), in their manners, circumstances and prejudices, should unite in forming a system of National Government, so little liable to well-founded objections."[1] Miss Catherine Drinker Bowen's recently published book on the convention is called *Miracle at Philadelphia.* Whatever it was, or should be called, all who are open to an examination of the evidence will admit that it was an extraordinary event.

Off to a Slow Start

Even so, the convention did not get underway any more auspiciously than did most other assemblages in that age; it was called for May 14, but there was not a quorum to do business until May 25. It was no easy matter to assemble men from over the length and breadth of the United States; delegates from Georgia, say, had a formidable distance to travel, and even an early start did not necessarily lead to a prompt arrival. In any case, promptness was better calculated in weeks than in hours.

The Virginia delegation was the first appointed by a legislature, and its members began to arrive in Philadelphia before other out-of-staters. It was an impressive delegation, including among its members some of that state's leading citizens; George Washington, Edmund Randolph, George Mason, and James Madison. (George Wythe, one of the best legal minds in America, put in an appearance but left shortly to attend his dying wife.) Most of the Pennsylvania delegates did not have to make a journey to get to Philadelphia, so that they were avail-

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able from the beginning. It was an impressive delegation, for it included Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris (who, if he was there, remained silent during the debates), Gouverneur Morris, and James Wilson.

The New England states were not only the slowest in appointing delegates but also theirs were among the last to arrive. Rhode Island rejected the invitation to appoint delegates. (The absence of Rhode Islanders was not considered a handicap during the convention, for that state's behavior was so universally deplored that men did not gladly seek the counsel of her citizens.) The New Hampshire delegates were exceedingly late; two of the four appointed finally arrived on July 23. (They could not come earlier because the state had not provided for their expenses.) New York appointed three delegates – Alexander Hamilton, Robert Yates, and John Lansing–, rather reluctantly, we gather, for Yates and Lansing withdrew after a short period of attendance and Hamilton was absent for an extended period. Over all, twelve states had 55 delegates in attendance at one time or another. From most indications, the greatest concern for a stronger general government was among the delegates from the states located from New Jersey southward. The leadership in the convention came mainly from four states, and in this order: Virginia, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and South Carolina. Two other state delegations played some considerable role: New Jersey and Massachusetts. Delegates from other states were generally less conspicuous during the debates, though Luther Martin of Maryland and George Read of Delaware would have led if they could have attracted followers.

Qualifications of Delegates

The delegates were as well qualified as could have been assembled in America, qualified both by experience and training. Among them were thirty-nine who had served at one time or another in Congress, eight who had signed the Declaration of Independence, eight who had helped draw state constitutions, one, John Dickinson, who is credited with the first draft of the Articles of Confederation, seven who had been chief executives of their states, and twenty-one who had fought in the war. Thirty-three were lawyers, and ten of these had served as judges. About half of them were college graduates, more from Princeton than from any other institution.[2]

Both youth and advanced age were represented at the conven-

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tion. The youngest delegate was Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey at twenty-six; the oldest, Benjamin Franklin, who was, as he said, in his eighty-second year. The average age was in the low forties. Some of the leaders, however, were rather young: Charles Pinckney of South Carolina was only 29, Gouverneur Morris 35, and James Madison 36. They were counterbalanced by men of middling years and extensive experience, for example; John Dickinson 54, Roger Sherman 66, and John Langdon 67.

George Washington Called

George Washington almost did not come, even though his presence at the convention was essential – for it was generally agreed that he was America's first personage. When he was informed of his election, he asked that someone else be appointed in his stead. He gave two reasons why he should be excused: one that now appears trivial, that he had already declined an invitation to attend the convention of the Society of the Cincinnati which would be meeting in Philadelphia at about the same time; the other, however, was good enough reason in any age, for he was suffering so from rheumatism that he could turn in bed only with the greatest difficulty, and men do not gladly leave the comforts of home when they are ill. Friends so earnestly urged him to attend, however, that he changed his mind.

Washington arrived at Philadelphia before the convention was scheduled to begin. It had long since become difficult for him to go anywhere quietly, and there was good reason to publicize this trip. He was met at Chester by a troop of horse which escorted him into Philadelphia where cannon were fired and bells rung.[3] The fact that Washington had arrived gave notice that the convention was important and that laggards should make haste to get there. When the convention was organized, Washington was elected, unanimously (as when was he not?), to preside, an office which he took so seriously that he attended each session, though it was the most oppressively hot summer in the memory of Philadelphians. If Washington could endure it, others could and did. He was a man of stern visage, impressive physique, and high seriousness; with him in the chair, the convention could hardly be anything but what it was, a deliberative body which pursued its business in an absence of frivolity and without stooping to personalities. Though Washington did not participate in the debates until the closing days when he made a brief speech, there was

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no doubt where he stood on the Constitution. He signed it gladly, and took care to let men about the country know that he approved of it. The men in the convention were aware that when they looked toward the chair, they were gazing at the man who would almost certainly be the first President of the United States. This emboldened those who wanted a strong President to make the office powerful, for they were confident that Washington would not abuse such powers. Gouverneur Morris wrote to Washington a few weeks after the convention to describe the importance of his role:

> I have observed that your name to the new Constitution has been of infinite service. Indeed, I am convinced that if you had not attended the Convention, and the same paper had been handed out to the world, it would have met with a cooler reception, with fewer and weaker advocates, and with more and more strenuous opponents.[4]

Franklin's Role

Benjamin Franklin was the other most prominent American; his hold on the affections of his countrymen was not so great as that of Washington, but his international fame was such that any gathering which had the benefit of his counsels gained in reputation. Though he was getting old — in fact, was old —, his mind was still clear, his vast fund of experience still at his command, and his accomplishments as a raconteur still led men to seek his company. He was not only aged but also infirm. He had to be carried in a sedan chair to the sessions, and he wrote out any but the briefest of remarks so that they could be read to the convention by his fellow Pennsylvanian, James Wilson. Franklin contributed most to the convention by avuncular admonitions to the delegates to compromise, to compose their differences, and to put aside so much of their personal desires as might be necessary to accomplish the object at hand. When the convention appeared to be so near to breaking up over the question of equal or proportional representation, Doctor Franklin said: "When a broad table is to be made, and edges of planks do not fit, the artist takes a little from both, and makes a good joint. In like manner here both sides must part with some of their demands, in order that they may join in some accommodating proposition."[5] At another point, he proposed that the sessions be opened with prayer, for he seemed to think that the influence of religion might link them together in their efforts to arrive at a new system. At the close of the convention, Franklin made an elo-

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quent plea to get those who were holding out to sign what they had helped to make. In a speech, read by James Wilson, Franklin said, among other things:

> I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them: For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others. . . .
>
> On the whole, Sir, I can not help expressing a wish that every member of the Convention who may still have objections to it, would with me, on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility, and to make manifest our unanimity, put his name to this instrument.[6]

His advanced age may have increased the influence of his spirit of accommodation, but he had been adept at the arts of politics and diplomacy long before the contentions of young men tired him.

Though the convention was not a large body, a few men did most of the speaking and a great deal of the other work of hammering out the Constitution. The leaders included: Madison, Mason and Randolph of Virginia, Gouverneur Morris and Wilson of Pennsylvania, Charles Pinckney and Rutledge of South Carolina, Ellsworth and Sherman of Connecticut, King and Gerry of Massachusetts, and, perhaps, Paterson of New Jersey. According to one tabulation, Gouverneur Morris spoke on 173 different occasions; Wilson, 168; Madison, 161; Sherman, 138; Mason, 136; and Gerry, 119.[7]

James Madison

James Madison has frequently been described as the Father of the Constitution. Certainly, he was one of its principal architects. He was not impressive to look at; judging by his appearance it would have been easy to have mistaken him for a clerk. He was quite short and thin, "Little Jemmy," they called him, "no bigger than a half cake of soap." Nor was he an orator; he spoke in such a low voice that those keeping journals often missed a part of what he said. He made up for these shortcomings, however, with intellectual acuity, sharp insight, and tenacity in the pursuit of his object. Moreover, he had prepared himself for the task of making a new constitution. Much of his time in the months before the convention had been spent in reading, and mas-

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tering, the literature on government. A plea to Jefferson in Paris had brought a plethora of books to augment the supply at home. The Virginia Plan, from which the Constitution emerged, was presented on the floor by Governor Randolph, but Madison had undoubtedly done much of the work on it. He might be said to have mothered the Constitution, too, because he devoted himself to it exclusively during the months of the convention. His recollection was that he not only attended every session but that he was never absent for more than a few minutes, and he was certain that he could not have missed a single speech of any duration. He kept copious notes of the speeches, and they are judged to be the most reliable record of what was said. This was a marathon undertaking itself, but he also spoke frequently, and at length, with a masterful show of erudition.

Gouverneur Morris

Gouverneur Morris was, however, the most dazzling speaker in the convention, an orator whose learning and close reasoning gave an irresistible thrust to his forensic skill. He had been maimed both in arm and leg, stumped about on a wooden leg, but it is difficult to think of him as a cripple, for he was reputed to be quite a lady's man and known for being a *bon vivant*. Madison and Morris were men who knew what they wanted, who pressed the convention step by step in their direction, who took care to see that what they had won by their reasoning was not lost in the maneuvers over detail, but who yielded gracefully when they were outvoted.

There must have been many moments of high drama during the convention, but I think the most eloquent speech fell from Gouverneur Morris. The occasion was the discussion of the counting of slaves for purposes of representation. "He never would concur in upholding domestic slavery," Morris said. "It was a nefarious institution. It was the curse of heaven on the States where it prevailed. . . . Proceed southwardly and every step you take through the great region of slaves presents a desert increasing, with the increasing proportion of these wretched beings. . . . The admission of slaves into the Representation when fairly examined comes to this: that the inhabitant of Georgia and South Carolina who goes to the Coast of Africa, and in defiance of the most sacred laws of humanity tears away his fellow creatures from their dearest connections and damns them to the most cruel bondages, shall have more votes in a Government insti-

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tuted for the protection of the rights of mankind, than the Citizen of Pennsylvania or New Jersey who views with a laudable horror so nefarious a practice. . . . And what is the proposed compensation of the Northern States for a sacrifice of every principle of right, of every impulse of humanity. . .? He would sooner submit himself to a tax for paying for all the negroes in the United States, than saddle posterity with such a Constitution."[8] It is generally believed, too, that Morris did much of the work of the committee on style which transformed the disparate elements which had survived the debates into the congruous whole we know as the Constitution — spare, brief, and potent with phrases that have since been etched into American consciousness by court decision and other action or inaction.

Giants Among Men

Impressions tumble over one another of the men during the sessions of the convention: of George Washington presiding from his high-backed chair, leaning forward to try to discern the order of the proposals from amidst the welter of motions made from the floor, forbearing to speak on the issues because it would not be proper; of James Madison, scribbling away at his notes, taking the floor to make a point, retiring to his quarters at the end of the day to flesh out his notes and review what had been done; of the proud and passionate Edmund Randolph, a young politician already in mid-career, presenting the Virginia Plan to the convention, vacillating on issues as the Constitution took shape, unwilling at last to sign the handiwork of the convention which had been shaped from his proposals; of James Wilson, tenaciously pressing for a national government, rising yet once again to speak for giving the people a more direct role in the government; of George Read, difficult to listen to but determined to be heard, single-mindedly arguing for a more powerful executive; of craggy Roger Sherman, whose face would stop a clock but whose arguments moved the convention toward the accomplishment of its task; of Charles Pinckney, young, brash, but sufficiently brilliant in debate to command the attention of the others; of George Mason, early and late a defender of the rights of man, working with an obvious good will to shape the Constitution, but at last unwilling to sign it; of John Dickinson, theoretician of resistance in youth, coming to fame with his daring employment of reason, now grown

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older declaiming: "Experience must be our only guide. Reason may mislead us."[9]; and of Jonathan Dayton, the youngest man there, rising to second what had not clearly been a motion by Gouverneur Morris on the evils of slavery and saying: "He did it . . . that his sentiments on the subject might appear whatever might be the fate of the amendment."[10]

Among the Missing

Though the convention was composed of as impressive an assemblage of men as could have been got together at any time, there were some prominent Americans not there. John Adams was out of the country, doing his best to represent the Congress before the royal court in London. Adams had lately published a book which surveyed the constitutional arrangements of various countries, a book whose influence might have been greater if its author had been present at the convention. Thomas Jefferson was in Paris as Minister to France. Any gathering without him was missing one of the American luminaries. Several of the firebrands of the Revolution were missing, if not missed, for they were better known for heat than light. Among them were: Samuel Adams who was not chosen, Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry who did not choose to attend, and Thomas Paine who was in Europe trying to promote a project for steel bridges in the interlude between revolutions. Probably if some of these men had been there they would have given such vociferous support to the idea of including a bill of rights that it would have been done, thus removing what turned out to be *the* major objection to the Constitution.

Rules of Order

The convention was organized so as to proceed about its business without interference from outsiders or without inhibiting full discussion. The sessions were held behind closed doors; no record of what was said or being considered there was to be released without the approval of the convention. There were no galleries to be played to, no press to be placated. Strict rules governing the behavior of members were adopted. For example:

> Every member rising to speak, shall address the President; and whilst he shall be speaking, none shall pass between them, or hold discourse with another, or read a book, pamphlet or paper. . . .
>
> A member shall not speak oftener than twice, without special leave, upon the same question; and not the second time, before every other, who had been silent, shall have been heard, if he wish to speak.[11]

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The convention operated on the rule that no decision on any particular of the constitution should be considered final. This enabled the convention to adjust the parts to one another as alterations were made.

The convention was remarkable both for its orderliness and for the absence of rancor among the members. On the one or two occasions when tempers flared, the strong feeling quickly subsided. There did appear to be some impatience in the last few days with going over ground already covered. Even so, an effort was made in the last days to make changes that might satisfy the few holdouts from signing. It is necessary to read but briefly into Madison's notes to get the feeling that these men were taking very seriously what they were doing, that though their task was urgent everything must be considered with great care. Above all, many were determined to stick with the undertaking until something had been completed to present to the public.

Doubts and Differences

It was well that they were, for their object lay on the other side of a thicket of uncertainties, doubts, and differences. Even what they were supposed to do at the convention was in doubt. The resolution adopted by Congress calling the convention declared that it was to be for the "sole purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation." It was clear enough what Congress had said, but these men were gathered to represent their states and were supposed to act under their instructions, if any. The instructions differed enough one from the other that a good case could be made that the convention could do what its members thought best. Most of those gathered agreed with the idea that their task was to construct a plan for a new system of government, or accepted it without cavil. The few who did not could leave, and some did.

It was only with some difficulty that they agreed on how they would vote. Delegates from several states were bent on having representation in the new government based on population or wealth, as the Virginia Plan provided. They would have the best chance of getting this into a constitution if the states had votes in the convention proportionate to their populations. There was no likelihood, however, that the smaller states might agree to this, so the convention votes were by states, each state having one vote regardless of how many delegates there were, just as in the case of the Congress. If a state's delega-

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tion was tied in a vote, that state's vote would not be counted. A majority of the states present and voting was sufficient to any decision.

States' Rights

Sentiment had been building for some time that, if there was to be an effective union of the states, the general government must have the power to use force on individuals. This, as many saw it, was the only way to "render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union . . . ,"[12] as the declaration drawn at the Annapolis Convention the year before had described the need. A man named Stephen Higginson had written to General Knox earlier in 1787 describing precisely what needed to be done: "The Union must not only have the right to make laws and requisitions, but it must have the power of compelling obedience thereto. . . ."[13] Washington had written to Madison in March: "I confess . . . that my opinion of public virtue is so far changed, that I have my doubts whether any system, without the means of coercion in the sovereign will enforce due obedience to the ordinances of a General Government; without which every thing else fails.... But what kind of coercion, you may ask. This indeed will require thought. . . ."[14] Washington wrote to John Jay in the following vein: "I do not conceive we can exist long as a nation without having lodged somewhere a power which will pervade the whole Union in an energetic a manner, as the authority of the State Governments extends over the several States. . . ."[15]

There was no way, however, of contriving a general government which could compel obedience without encroaching on the powers of the states. Indeed, any attempt to work out such a plan had major obstacles in the way. Both theory and history militated against divided sovereignty. Theory said it could not be done; history afforded no clear-cut examples of its having been successfully done. If sovereignty could not be divided, if a general government was to have coercive power, then the general government would have to be sovereign and the states become but districts in a nation. There were men at the convention who saw it this way and were ready to grasp the nettle.

Firm Determination to Preserve State Sovereignty

But such a plan had little hope of ratification, if any. Madison described some of the difficulty in a letter to Edmund Pendleton before the convention:

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> . . . The necessity of gaining the concurrence of the Convention in some system that will answer the purpose, the subsequent approbation of Congress, and the final sanction of the States, presents a series of chances which would inspire despair in any case where the alternative was less formidable.[16]

But if Madison had not known beforehand that the states would be jealous of their powers and prerogatives, he would have found out soon enough in the convention. George Mason, his fellow Virginian, expressed his determination to preserve the vitality of the states in calm but measured words: "He took this occasion to repeat, that notwithstanding his solicitude to establish a national Government, he never would agree to abolish the State Governments or render them absolutely insignificant. They were as necessary as the General Government and he would be equally careful to preserve them."[17] Luther Martin of Maryland said that he agreed with Mason "as to the importance of the State Governments. He would support them at the expense of the General Government which was instituted for the purpose of that support. . . . [T]hey are afraid of granting powers unnecessarily, lest they should defeat the original end of the Union; lest the powers should prove dangerous to the sovereignties of the particular State which the Union was meant to support; and expose the lesser to being swallowed up by the larger."[18] Doctor Johnson in contrasting the Virginia and New Jersey Plans (the Virginia Plan calling for representation to be apportioned according to wealth and/or population while the New Jersey Plan called for representation by states), brought some of the difficulties out in the open. He noted that James Wilson and James Madison, advocates of the Virginia Plan, did not propose to destroy the states. "They wished," he said, "to leave the States in possession of a considerable, though a subordinate jurisdiction. They had not yet however shown how this could consist with, or be secured against the general sovereignty and jurisdiction, which they proposed to give to the national Government."[19]

A Unique Situation

Some held that they were departing from experience even to try to contrive a government which depended upon divided sovereignty. Others argued that the American situation was unique, that history afforded no clear model for it, and that they must innovate. Charles Pinckney summed up the peculiar situation of America in vigorous exposition:

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> The people of this country are not only very different from the inhabitants of any State we are acquainted with in the modern world; but I assert that their situation is distinct from either the people of Greece or Rome, or of any State we are acquainted with among the ancients....
>
> Our true situation appears to me to be this—a new extensive Country *containing within itself the materials* for forming a Government capable of extending to its citizens all the blessings of civil and religious liberty—capable of making them happy at home. . . .[20]

Reason is the sword of the young; experience the shield of age. Some of the young men at the convention were for casting a new system, but others wanted no such heady innovation. In any case, the states must be preserved.

Some of the proponents of an energetic general government declared that there was little danger to the states to be expected from it. They appealed to the history of confederacies to show that time and again it was the states who had intruded upon and broken up the general government. Others appealed to a broader experience to show that where power was confided in any government it tended to crush all opposing power.

A Government Worth Serving

The general government must have sufficient power and prestige to attract able and dedicated men into its service. The energy of government proceeds from the men in it, as John Francis Mercer of Maryland argued. "It is a great mistake to suppose that the paper we are to propose will govern the United States. It is the men whom it will bring into the Government and interest in maintaining it that is to govern them."[21] Americans of that time were familiar with something that their descendants know little about: of government with so little of power and prestige that able men would not deign to serve in it. A seat in the Congress was hardly coveted by the first citizens, and state governments found it difficult to attract men of ambition and integrity. Some men in the convention were loath to provide much reward for serving in the general government, on the ground that men would be attracted for reasons of personal gain rather than service. Alexander Hamilton answered the argument this way: "We must take man as we find him, and if we expect him to serve the public must interest his passions in doing so."[22] The idea was vigorously pushed in the convention of limiting the length of time a man might serve in the general government as well as making those who left office ineligible for appointive office for a

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time. James Wilson argued against this idea; he "animadverted on the impropriety of stigmatizing with the name of venality the laudable ambition of rising into the honorable offices of the Government. . . ."[23] James Madison said: "The objects to be aimed at were to fill all offices with the fittest characters, and to draw the wisest and most worthy citizens into the Legislative service."[24] He doubted that this could be done by hedging them around with ineligibilities and disqualifications.

Checks and Balances

Once grant the points that sufficient power be authorized to attract strong men into government and impart energy to it and to give the general government power to act directly upon individuals, however, all were agreed that checks must be introduced on this power. Gouverneur Morris thought the following principles must be introduced:

> . . . Abilities and virtue, are equally necessary in both branches. Something more then is now wanted. 1. The checking branch must have a personal interest in checking the other branch, one interest must be opposed to another interest. Vices as they exist must be turned against each other. . . . 3. It should be independent.[25]

James Madison declared that if it "be essential to the preservation of liberty that the Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary powers be separate, it is essential to a maintenance of the separation, that they should be independent of each other."[26]

Separation of Powers

Yet, to accomplish this was a most difficult task. In the British system there were different classes to be represented, each class providing an independent base for its representatives. In America, there was no such actual division of the population. In Britain, the monarchy and the secular members of the House of Lords held hereditary positions, adding another dimension to their independence. But Americans neither had nor wanted hereditary officials. Hence, the problem: functions might be separated from one another readily, but how could those in the different branches have different sources of their power? Some were for having the executive chosen by Congress. But others pointed out that, if this were the case, he would be dependent on that body. Judges might be appointed by the Senate, but if that body might also remove them from office where was their independence? Probably, more time was spent on the question of how the executive

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should be chosen than any other, though it did not excite the emotions the way the matter of whether representation in Congress should be based on population or by states did.

Above all, there was the question of how those who were to govern could be made sufficiently independent of their electors to make wise decisions without posing fatal dangers to the liberties of the people. Undoubtedly, if the government was to be republican it must be based on voters from among the people. Nor, as some men never tired of saying, was it to be doubted that those whose rights were involved were the best protectors of them or that the ballot box was the place to do it. Some thought that frequent elections would be the best means of protecting the people. Roger Sherman observed that "Government is instituted for those who live under it. It ought therefore to be so constituted as not to be dangerous to their liberties. The more permanency it has the worse if it be a bad Government. Frequent elections are necessary to preserve the good behavior of rulers."[27] Others questioned this principle, for they noted that a too close dependence of the government on the people resulted not in wise and stable government but in the pandering of politicians to the temporary and changing opinions of the populace. Madison had said just prior to Sherman's remarks that the objective of the constitution was "first to protect the people against their rulers; secondly to protect the people against the transient impressions into which they themselves might be led. . . ." A "reflection . . . becoming a people . . . would be that they themselves . . . were liable to err . . . from fickleness and passion."[28] Alexander Hamilton pointed out that lately "the Government had entirely given way to the people, and had in fact suspended many of its ordinary functions in order to prevent those turbulent scenes which had appeared elsewhere."[29]

Principles Not Compromised

Perhaps, enough of the difficulties have been recounted to illustrate the fact that the Founders were wrestling with real practical and intellectual problems at the convention. Some twentieth century historians have attempted to interpret their differences in terms of class interests and other factors. It is not necessary to do this in order to account for the debates; it also drags in matters extraneous to the subjects at issue. Moreover, such an account does not explain the compromises that were eventually made; if men were moved only by narrow interests they

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would have been expected to cling to their views rather than compromise.

Compromise they did, however, in many matters that initially divided them. Indeed, some historians have gone so far as to describe the Constitution as a "bundle of compromises." The phrase has sometimes been used derogatorily to imply that on issue after issue men had yielded up their principles to the expediency of accommodating a welter of interests. Yet, a compromise need not be a yielding of a principle; it may well be the result of sacrificing narrow interest to the general well being. So it was, quite often, at the convention at Philadelphia; men advanced narrow and limited views in the debates but arrived at great principles through compromise. The stately, but simple, rhythms of the Constitution as it came from the committee on style captured principle after principle in its verbiage, meshed them together into a symphonic whole, and provided the plan for the government of an empire for liberty. That it could be done appeared most unlikely at the outset. That it had been done was not so clear at the time. That it was done seems now a miracle. It is, therefore, appropriate to examine these principles.

• FOOTNOTES •

1 Quoted in Charles Warren, *The Making of the Constitution* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1937), p. 737.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.
3 *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 730.
5 James Madison, *Notes of the Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*, Adrienne Koch, intro. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1966), p. 227.
6 *Ibid.*, pp. 653-54.
7 Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
8 Madison, *Notes*, pp. 411-12. The present writer has taken the liberty of modernizing the spelling and using complete words rather than the abbreviations as they appear in the original.
9 *Ibid.*, p. 447.
10 *Ibid.*, p. 412.
11 *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.
12 Jack P. Greene, ed., *Colonies to Nation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 511.
13 Quoted in Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
14 *Ibid.*, p. 44.
15 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
16 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
17 Madison, *Notes*, p. 159.
18 *Ibid.*, p. 159.
19 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
21 *Ibid.*, p. 455.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 175.
23 *Ibid.*, p. 177.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 178.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 233.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 311.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 195.
28 *Ibid.*, pp. 193-94.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Next: Principles of the Constitution.

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ELIOT and HIS AGE

IT WAS HARDLY the "age of Eliot" when the poet and critic whom Russell Kirk calls "the greatest man of letters in his time" was alive and active. Shaw, Wells, and Hemingway, to pick examples at random, had much greater names. Nevertheless the title of Mr. Kirk's book, *Eliot and his Age* (Random House, 463 pp. $12.50) has an *ex post* justification: the dominant literary and philosophical trends of the earlier Twentieth Century are manifestly dying, while Eliot's "moral imagination," which penetrated to the heart of what Mr. Kirk calls "the Permanent Things," is bound to have more and more influence as time goes on.

T. S. Eliot was considered very much a contemporary symbol for a few brief years when his *The Waste Land* was taken to be the poetic counterpart of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The children of the "lost generation" accepted *The Waste Land,* with its vivid images of decay, as the definitive statement of a negative philosophy. It had been published in *The Dial,* which Professor Copeland of Harvard considered decadent. With lovely women stooping to automatic folly, with hollow men leaning witlessly together, and with people dancing around prickly pears instead of mulberry bushes, Eliot's early poetry evoked a world without values. The contrast with the literature of the ages of belief was painful, even as Joyce's "odyssey" in modern Dublin, when stacked up against the Homeric model, was painful. But pain was delight in those days; we reveled in our agnostic gloom.

If *The Waste Land* set the anarchic mood of the early Nineteen Twenties, when all the faiths were questioned, it can't be said that

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Eliot dominated anything when, with the essays of *For Lancelot Andrewes,* he suddenly proclaimed himself in 1928 to be a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo-Catholic in religion. The generation that had taken *The Waste Land* to be a full statement of an enduring despair felt that Eliot had lost touch with reality. The new faiths that were a-borning at the end of the Twenties and in the early Thirties were secular, the politics of the time accepted commissars but not kings. As for "classicism," how could the author of *Prufrock* and *The Waste Land* have any truck with such sterile categorizing? He had broken a mold, departed from tradition, and now here he was extolling tradition. Eliot's friends in Bloomsbury were mystified, if not aghast.

Prophet or Anachronism?

As a magazine editor and essayist in the Thirties, Eliot was accepted as a prophet by a few and as an anachronism by the many. Most of his contemporaries in England had gone Left; the Spanish Republicans, manipulated more and more by the Communists, were all the rage. In America the young flocked to the New Deal and the proletcult took over in the New York publishing companies. It was distinctly not the "age of Eliot."

Russell Kirk, who came of age as a writer in the Nineteen Fifties when the new conservative movement was just getting started in America, cannot really believe that Eliot's magazine, *The Criterion,* was generally regarded in the pre-World War II period as a futile effort to put back the clock. But if Kirk can't quite conjure up the anti-Eliot flavor of the Thirties, his very inability to credit the potency of the socialist and interventionist trends in politics and the power of agnosticism in the spiritual realm has enabled him to see Eliot clear. Kirk sees things in *The Waste Land* that we couldn't see a generation ago. Eliot was always fascinated by Dante, and Eliot's own career was destined to have a symbolism that might be summed up in Dantesque terms. *The Waste Land* and *Prufrock* were Eliot's Inferno. He struggled out of his earthly hell through the purgatory of his *Ash Wednesday.* The Paradiso was to come later, when Eliot, defending the idea of a Christian society, found that he could believe in a religion based on revelation and authority.

Going deeply into Eliot's contemporary journalism as well as into his poems, plays, and books of essays, Mr. Kirk turns Eliot into a Johnsonian figure of plain common sense. Eliot's comments on

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the march of the dictators, his criticism of Britain's conservatives for their failure to solve the problem of the social crisis at home and to arm the empire for the coming war against Hitler, have the true prophetic ring. They can stand reprinting as the contemporary observations of the Webbs, the Shavians, the Wellsians, and the writers of the Bloomsbury clique cannot. The wonder is that they had such little impact at the time.

Bulwark for Conservatism

But if the pre-World War II Eliot was a prophet without honor both in his native United States and in his adopted England, he is having his delayed effect. Kirk has managed to turn him into a mighty bulwark for Burkean conservatism. The inner order, as both Edmund Burke and Russell Kirk insist, must affirm cultural and religious continuity. The outer order, the achievement of a true commonwealth, will take care of itself if the inner order is based on what Mr. Kirk calls Right Reason and a faith that accepts both the morality and the mystical sense of an unseen ruler of the universe.

Kirk is against what he calls Demon Ideology; human nature, as he sees it, must revolt against the effort to force life into patterns that come from the brain of a Hegel, a Marx, or even an Adam Smith. Society has an organic continuity that includes many logical inconsistencies, and Kirk is willing to accept the organic as against the dictates of individual rationality and private judgment. As a practical matter, I can see why the organic must be defended against those who would abolish inconsistencies by invoking force; a sane commonwealth must move slowly when it comes to abolishing anything that has become dignified by tradition. If we don't move slowly, we end up killing each other. But the Burkean position necessitates a willingness to accept some fuzziness at the edges that makes critical discourse unsatisfactory.

I wish I could be sure I knew what Kirk means when he speaks of Right Reason. He leaves me groping fuzzily for definition. If reason can be wrong, isn't it a sign that it is unreasonable in the first place? Again, Kirk speaks of the "higher reason," which transcends "neat constructions." If Kirk, emulating Eliot, is merely saying that there are things we must take on faith (life is rooted in mystery), I can follow him. But I don't know what he gains by the hypostasis that is implied by the use of such terms as Right Reason, the Higher Reason, the Permanent Things, and Demon Ideology. They

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demand what might become whole libraries of qualification, and so they become thought-stoppers instead of thought-liberators.

In general, however, Kirk is plain enough. The Burkean tradition, which he exemplifies, cannot be reconciled with Five-Year Plans, or with centralized controls and dictated prices. T. S. Eliot's Burkean common sense implies a general defense of the free market, which makes Kirk's latest book relevant for readers of an economic journal. Incidentally, the book, which is not a biography, contains enough biographical material to satisfy those who are curious about one of our great exiles. In all, it is a most distinguished work.

▸ THE IDEOLOGICAL IMAGINATION by Louis J. Halle (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1972) 174 pp., $6.95

Reviewer: Edmund A. Opitz

THIS COMPACT book is divided into thirty-nine short, pithy chapters; the style is terse, sometimes aphoristic. It reads like good conversation. A dedicated totalitarian might not get the message, but these pages will surely help the earnest student of society trace the "Gadarene progress" of the nations from 1789 to 1984. The political disasters of this period proceed inexorably from a wrong assessment of human nature and the human condition, and no improvement is possible except as individual persons reorder their own priorities.

It is an observed fact that people differ, one from the other, in their beliefs, their interests, their talents. A free society, such as the nation contemplated by the authors of *The Federalist*, seeks to accommodate this diversity, and to profit from it. Most modern nations, however, are under the sway of an ideology which contends that state power should be used to impose uniformity on the masses; those who differ, those who dissent from the ideology are reprogramed or liquidated. In whose minds were conceived the notion that human nature is to be made over? What books argued that this is the task of politics? What is the origin of the modern outlook which persuades so many to perpetrate, or endure, or acquiesce in the monstrous evils of the Twentieth Century?

The author touches upon the straightforward authoritarianism of Hobbes, devotes a couple of pages to Hegel, but dwells at length on the contributions of Rousseau and Marx to the moulding of the ideological imagination. There is more to Rousseau than Halle allows, but ideas were

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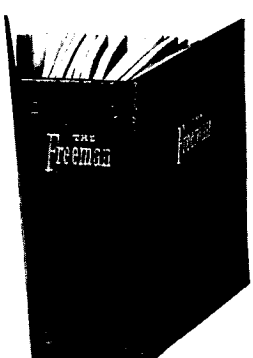
launched which turn man into a sick animal and then offer a cure that compounds the disease. The type of man who has emerged in ever increasing numbers since the French Revolution is less concerned with people and things than with his own feelings about people and things; he's forever fingering his pulse, calculating his responses, examining his motives, and as a result he feels estranged from his fellows. He needs the warmth of the herd to heal the hurt of alienation, and thus is driven to submerge his individuality and escape personal responsibility in the Marxist state, whose claims on him are total.

But the claims are fraudulent; rulers and ruled alike are but fallible men and the ideas which keep them in their respective places are phony. We are men and not gods, and should conduct our lives accordingly. "It seems to me," Halle writes, "that the primary concern of any individual who feels he has a light to live by must be to live by that light himself; it must be with the constant improvement of his own standards; it must be with the level to which he is able to raise himself."



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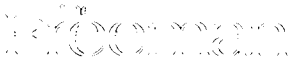

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